# CHRISTIANITY AND SOME LIVING RELIGIONS OF THE EAST

# CHRISTIANITY AND SOME LIVING RELIGIONS OF THE EAST

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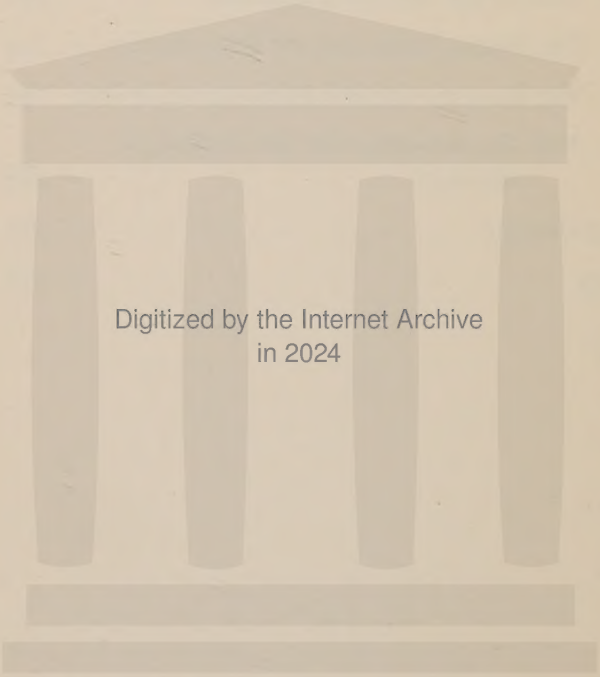
# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Christianity and Non-Christian Religions | 13 |
| II. | The Nature of the Divine | 34 |
| III. | The Manifestation of the Divine | 75 |
| IV. | The Divine and Human Needs | 112 |
| V. | The Moral Ideal and its Realization | 144 |
| VI. | The Meaning and the Permanence of Life | 177 |
| VII. | The Universality of the Christian Message | 209 |
| Bibliography | | 217 |
| Index | | 219 |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# PREFACE

In a previous volume of this Series the writer sought to provide a concise *Introduction to the Study of Some Living Religions of the East*. In this volume he has ventured to compare their dominant conceptions with those of Christianity.

If by lack of bias is meant lack of interest in any one religion, the writer would not profess to be unbiased. As a French novelist puts it, 'The pretension to be without a prejudice is itself a prejudice.' The writer does not claim that kind of impartiality which comes from holding that all religions are equally true ; that seems to him only another way of saying that all religions are equally false. Because he believes that in Christ there has been given a revelation of God which is of universal significance, he believes that the aspirations expressed in other religions may find in Christ their full satisfaction, and he has sought to describe these aspirations, not coldly nor harshly, but as men describe the cherished convictions of honoured friends.

Christianity and non-Christian religions are to-day in too intimate contact for the problem of their interrelation to be any longer ignored. The writer has tried, within the limits of his space, both to provide material for the exploration of

this problem, and to give some indication of what seems to him its true solution.

It is the writer's pleasant duty to express his gratitude to one of his students, Mr. Cyril B. Firth, B.A., for the great assistance he has given in the correction of the proofs.

Cheshunt College, Cambridge.
*November*, 1928.

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ana.* | *Analects.* |
| *A.V.* | *Atharvaveda.* |
| *Br.* | *Brāhmana.* |
| *Brih. Up.* | *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad.* |
| *Chhānd. Up.* | *Chhāndogya Upanishad.* |
| *C.C.* | *The Chinese Classics*, edited and translated by Legge. |
| *E.R.E.* | *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.* |
| *Kāth. Up.* | *Kāthaka Upanishad.* |
| *Kaush. Up.* | *Kaushītaki Upanishad.* |
| *L.R.E.* | *An Introduction to the Study of Some Living Religions of the East.* |
| *Mund. Up.* | *Mundaka Upanishad.* |
| *R.H.C.* | *Redemption Hindu and Christian.* |
| *R.V.* | *Rigveda.* |
| *S.B.E.* | *Sacred Books of the East.* |
| *Sat. Br.* | *Satapatha Brāhmana.* |
| *S.* | *Sūrah.* |
| *Svet. Up.* | *Svetāsvatara Upanishad.* |
| *Vdd.* | *Vendīdād.* |
| *W.B.T.* | Warren, *Buddhism in Translations.* |
| *Ys.* | *Yasna.* |
| *Yt.* | *Yasht.* |

# I

# CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

It has become a platitude to say that the earth is now a very small place. Secure and speedy means of communication, the cable and the wireless, have taken from distance much of its meaning. Our newspapers bring to our breakfast table the news of the whole world. Not only are we at once informed of the events of other lands ; we are ourselves dependent on them. A failure of the monsoon in India reacts on the prosperity of Lancashire. A crime committed in Sarajevo involved in the miseries of a world-war peoples who before had not even heard of that remote Bosnian town. The success of the young Turks brought Europe once again to the brink of conflict, whilst the civil strife in China has been watched with anxiety by many in Europe who rightly saw in it the possibilities of fresh international disaster. Without peace there can be no security, and peace depends not on one nation but on all. We cannot, if we would, restrict our interests to our own country for the events of any country are the concern of all.

But platitudes often express truths so familiar that they are forgotten. And commonplace as is the fact of the contraction of the modern world, its bearing on the study of religion seems as yet to be inadequately realized. Thus in Christendom Christianity is often discussed as if it were the

monopoly of the Western world. In consequence, minor differences in its interpretation are unduly emphasized, whilst the distinctiveness of our common Christianity is obscured by the failure to relate its teachings to those of the other religions of the modern world. Much is due to the influence of the past. The great theological systems were, for the most part, formulated in ages when Christendom was isolated from the pagan world, and Christian teachers, trained in their methods, have been slow to realize the present contact of Christianity with the Living Religions of the East. But Christianity no longer exists in isolation. As in the Græco-Oriental world in which it won its first conspicuous victories, Christianity is once more confronted with other religions, and the problem of its relation to them can no longer be evaded.

### The Problem in the Past.

The past can give us here but little help. When the Church had gained its victory, its faith became the nominal faith of the Empire, and the profession of Christianity was made a requirement of citizenship. Pagan practices were increasingly absorbed ; but pagan religions, as rivals to Christianity, withered or were suppressed. The ' heretic ' Nestorians carried Christianity into far distant lands, but for many ' orthodox ' theologians it was enough that Christianity was the religion of the Empire ; in other religions they saw little need to interest themselves. Salvation, they believed, belonged only to the organized Church, and, ignoring altogether the great

world outside Christendom, a great ruler of the Church could later declare that ' for every human creature it was absolutely necessary for salvation that he should submit to the Roman Pontiff.'[1]

Of the religions of India there was naturally little knowledge. One great non-Christian religion alone was widely known—Islām, which was regarded as the enemy, not of Christianity only, but of Christendom. In the days of the tolerant Abbasid Caliphs, Islām had learnt much from Christianity, and, for a time, Christian teachers were welcomed at the Muslim court at Bagdad. Islām became the heir of Greek philosophy and science, and thus preserved for the West that Aristotelianism to which the revival of learning by the great Schoolmen was largely due. But that phase passed. Islām and Christianity confronted each other, not as rival religions only, but as the faiths of civilizations which were engaged in mortal conflict. The missionary work of Raymond Lull shines out in the Medieval Church in almost solitary splendour.[2] In vain did he protest against ' the attempt to acquire the Holy Land by force of arms,' ' whereas its conquest ought not to be attempted, save in the way in which Christ and the Apostles acquired it, by love and prayers, by the pouring out of tears and blood'. Christendom resisted the advance of Islām by the Crusades, and Muslim armies for long menaced the security

[1] Boniface VIII. The Bull, *Unam Sanctam*, A.D. 1302.

[2] In a completer account, reference would have to be made to missions like that of the Franciscans to the Mongols, led by Corvino. Dr. Southill remarks: ' When Corvino died, about 1328,' ' there were said to be 100,000 Catholic converts.'—*China and the West*, 1925, p. 53.

of Europe. In war it is impossible to learn or speak the truth, and Christians and Muslims naturally viewed each other with bitter suspicion ; each side ready to believe the worst of the faith of its antagonists.

The Reformation gave no immediate help. Its early years were marked by the siege of Vienna by the Turks, and Luther's *Table Talk* expresses the common Christian hatred of Islām. Later, the Protestant Churches were too absorbed in defending their precarious position, and in theological debates, to be interested in the non-Christian world. It was the Counter Reformation of the Roman Church which led to the first great concerted efforts to carry Christianity to the Far East. Xavier's missionary zeal is one of the glories of Christianity. But his work was too rapid to be thorough, and its permanent effect was restricted for the most part to the fisher castes of India, whom the protection of the Portuguese delivered from oppression. In China and Japan the Jesuit missionaries were conspicuously successful, but their success, won in part by political intrigue, was too sudden to be lasting, and the great churches which they founded were ruthlessly suppressed. In Protestant Europe, the bitter struggles of the wars of religion naturally led to a cooling of religious enthusiasm. The Deists in England and the leaders of the ' Illumination ' in Germany, turned with aversion from the formulations of ' revealed religion ' to the attempt to construct ' a natural theology ' which, as they believed, was the common faith of all unsophisticated by the teachings of an inter-

ested priesthood. The naïve assumptions of this 'natural theology' were destroyed by Hume in England and by Kant in Germany. Religion revived, but it revived in a more emotional form than that of the older orthodoxy. Pietism in Germany, and the Evangelical Revival in England led to a deepening of Christian experience which found its inevitable expression in an attempt to carry the Gospel into the 'heathen' world.

### The Influence of Modern Missions.

That missionary enterprise did not, at first, reveal the complexity of the problem of the relationship of Christianity to other religions. Its pioneers were men of their age, and their theology was more deep than broad. Much has been said of their intolerance—for the most part unjustly, for their critics have often forgotten that the paganism then encountered differed much from the paganism of to-day. Thus in India, Hinduism was passing through a period of degeneracy and decay. Not only was idolatry dominant, but that idolatry was associated with cruel customs and obscene rites. The nobler aspects of Hinduism were little known. It was the base alone that could be discerned. It is easy for us to-day to appreciate the moral sublimity of Zoroaster, and we find it hard at first to understand how our forefathers could speak as they did of the religion associated with his name. But the Zoroastrianism which such a one as Dr. Wilson condemned was based, not on the teaching of Zoroaster, but on the effete traditionalism of later times. For the Pārsīs with whom Dr. Wilson had to do the

*Gāthās* in which Zoroaster's teaching is preserved, were known only as magic formulæ expressed in a language which they did not understand. It is not surprising if, in these circumstances, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism were condemned in unmeasured terms, and the relationship of Christianity to non-Christian religions was held to be simply that of truth to falsehood, of light to darkness.

The Evangelical Revival concentrated on the 'saving of souls,' and was at first strangely tolerant of the defects of the social system. When faced with the patent evils of the East, its representatives naturally felt the superiority of Western civilization, and spoke, at times, with undue complacency of the social organization of the West. The influence of this complacency has remained till very recently, and many a missionary book has proclaimed, not only the supremacy of Christ, but the superiority of our Western culture. Thus in India, for instance, Hindus have not only been urged to abandon their caste system ; they have also been urged to adopt the competitive and individualistic economic system of the West. It is this which explains, in part, the resentment which the missionary enterprise has, at times, evoked. Christianity has been made to appear, not a Gospel, but the determined foe of the good as well as of the evil in Eastern civilization.

We may illustrate this resentment from the description given of the 'Western Christ' by Mozoomdar, one of the leaders of the Brāhma-Samāj, in the preface to his attractive book *The Oriental Christ*.

'He insists upon plenary inspiration, continually descants on miracles, imports institutions foreign to the genius of the continent, and, in case of non-compliance with whatever he lays down, condemns men to eternal darkness and death. He continually talks of blood and fire and hell. He considers innocent babes as the progeny of deadly sin; he hurls invectives on other men's faith, however truly and conscientiously held. No sacred notions are sacred to him, unless he has taught them. All self-sacrifice, which he does not understand, is delusion to him. All scriptures are false which have grown up outside of his dispensation, climate and nationality. He will revolutionize, denationalize, and alienate men from their kith and kin. Wherever he goes, men learn to beware of him. He is a Mlecha to Hindus, a Kaffir to Mohammedans, a rock of offence to everybody. He is tolerated only because he carries with him the imperial prestige of a conquering race.'[1]

Mozoomdar's description of the 'Western Christ' whom he contrasts with that 'Eastern Christ' who is 'the incarnation of unbounded love and grace'[2] reads like a caricature of some particularly unpleasant missionary. But even a caricature has in it some resemblance to truth, and his words are significant as showing the disgust which the intolerance of some missionaries caused even to men who, like Mozoomdar, were sympathetic to Christianity, and keenly appreciative of the character of Christ. Outside the narrowest of coteries, that intolerance has gone.

[1] *The Oriental Christ*, 1883, p. 43.
[2] *Op. cit.* p. 46.

Missionaries to-day think of non-Christian religions with sympathy and understanding. None are showing a greater eagerness to appreciate their highest aspirations than those who have given their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel to the pagan world.

### The Transformation of Non-Christian Religions.

The Living Religions of the East have changed much since the time of the beginnings of the modern missionary enterprise. In their transformation many influences have been at work. The translation by Western scholars of *The Sacred Books of the East* revealed to the East the rich heritage of the past, and brought to light treasures which had been forgotten. In consequence, many Orientals gained a new pride in their religion and learned to pass from its baser to its nobler elements.

In India educated Hindus have substituted the pure Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā* for the lewd Krishna of the later *Purānas*, whilst the *Upanishads* are now studied with new eagerness. The early contact of Hinduism with Christianity led to movements of radical reform like the Brāhma-and Prārthanā-Samājes which readily acknowledged their indebtedness to Christianity. Later movements, like the Ārya-Samāj, claim, instead, that their modified Hinduism is inherently superior to Christianity, whilst Theosophy has cast its glamour of pseudo-science even over such phases of Hinduism as idolatry and the exclusiveness of caste which the first reformers vigorously con-

demned. The little community of Pārsīs has now its distinguished scholars, who have turned from the decadent Zoroastrianism of the later *Avestā* and the Pahlavi books to the exalted ethical monotheism of Zoroaster, which the rediscovery of the *Gāthās* has once more revealed. Buddhism in Ceylon and Burma owes much to the publication of the Pāli texts, and Buddhists can now speak with new confidence and knowledge of the noble and gracious founder of their faith. Japan, long closed to Western influences, has absorbed with eagerness Western science. Shintō has been cleansed of its phallic elements, and sublimated into a religion of patriotism. Japanese Buddhism, especially in its Pure Land and True Pure Land forms, has shown an amazing power of assimilating Christian influences, and thus resisting the spread of Christianity. Islām was for long held to be incapable of change. To-day, in large parts of the Islāmic world it has been radically transformed. In India there is the refined Islām, represented by the late Syed Ameer Alī, in which everything in Muhammad's life which is repugnant to Western culture is explained away, whilst the Ahmadīya movement, although denounced as heretical by orthodox Muslims, has gained much popularity by the vigour of its attacks on the Christian faith. In Turkey, long the home of reactionary Islām, the Caliphate has been abolished and the connexion between the state and the Islāmic Church has been dissolved. Even the wearing of the veil by women is discarded. Islām has been transformed almost out of recognition.

These changes in non-Christian religions have

not made easier the Church's missionary task. The writer well remembers, some twenty years ago, asking a distinguished Indian Christian, himself the grandson of one of Dr. Duff's high-caste converts, how it was that converts from the high castes were to-day so few. His answer was significant. In his grandfather's time, the issue was a simple one. The choice lay then between Christianity and a Hinduism which at that time was terribly corrupt. To-day the choice is more complex. A man may refuse to become a Christian, and yet belong to a form of Hinduism, which is permeated with Christian influences, and free from all gross abuses. In this way, a man may gain much from Christianity without being cut off from Hindu society. Christianity suffers much in the East from its connexion with Christendom. Patriotism, which is in itself in part a product of Western influences, makes men reluctant to break away from their ancient heritage. The social evils of the West are to-day the common talk of the educated East. Everywhere there is a revolt against the dominance of Europe. Thus one so deeply influenced by Christianity as Mr. Gandhi can speak of our 'satanic civilization.' No Hindu has more frankly acknowledged his indebtedness to Christ, and yet he would feel that to become a Christian would be treachery to India, for, in his mind, Christianity is inseparably connected with the mechanistic civilization he abhors. If Christianity is accepted by the East, it will be accepted, not because of, but in spite of, its being the nominal religion of the West. The relationship of Christianity to non-Christian re-

ligions has become in the East a pressing problem. By very many, its claim to finality is regarded merely as yet another proof of Western arrogance.

### The Influence of Non-Christian Religions on the West.

Even in Christendom the problem of the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions demands more careful investigation than it has generally received from the official teachers of the Church. Thus the popularity of Theosophy can be, in part, explained by that ignorance of non-Christian religions which alone makes it possible for Theosophists to win a hearing for their claim that all religions teach the same great truths. The general acceptance of the idea of evolution has brought into prominence the unity of the race, so that it is hard to believe that any one section of it should have a monopoly of insight or of truth. The Science of Religion has made obsolete the view that religion is the product of a selfish and interested 'priestcraft.' Whilst it has borne an impressive witness to the universal fact of religion, it has not made it easier for any one religion to claim for itself a special place. Thus a writer on Mysticism to-day must deal, not only with Christian mysticisms, but with the mysticism of Hinduism and Sūfism, and no account of the prophetic type of religion is complete which ignores the prophetic consciousness of a Zoroaster or a Muhammad. A modern book on *Prayer* like that of Heiler illustrates its various types, not from Christianity only, but from non-Christian religions. The Psychology of

Religion has for its field, not one religion only, but all, and everywhere finds affinities and common types. Nor is it in the East alone that Christianity is in contact with other religions. Buddhism has gained in the West many admirers and some adherents. A great Indian scholar, Dr. Cooraswamy, in a book written chiefly for our own country, can claim that it is 'in Asiatic thought' that there can be attained that 'common will' which is necessary for 'the common civilization of the world' and sets forth, as a 'Gospel' which the Western world requires to hear, 'the marvellous directness and sincerity of the social ethic to which the psychology of Buddhism affords its sanction.'[1] Prof. Rādhakrishnan could at Oxford state that not only was Hinduism in no way inferior to any other religion, but that in its teaching was to be found the nearest approximation to final truth.[2] Rabindranath Tagore's books have been widely read in the West, and many are attracted by their sublimized Hinduism whilst the admiration felt for Mr. Gandhi's character has led to a new esteem for the Hinduism on which he claims to base his life of service and self-abnegation.

Thus what is the supreme religious question in the East is gaining in the West a new importance. Everywhere we are being driven to face the problem: Are Christianity and the Living Religions of the East optional expressions of the religious consciousness, or have we the

[1] *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, 1916 (reprinted 1928), p. vi.

[2] In his lectures given at Manchester College, Oxford, and published under the title *The Hindu View of Life*, 1927.

right in any sense to claim that Christianity has a universal significance, so that we may look forward to the time when it will be the religion of all religious men throughout the world ?

## The Problem in Modern Theology.

In that question the theology of the nineteenth century[1] was but little interested. In England, the Evangelical Revival was more influential in the sphere of practice than of thought, and its belief in the Infallibility of the Bible for long obscured the problem of the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions. The word of God was perfect, and must at all costs be obeyed. To refuse to recognize its authority was sin. Later, the Oxford Movement led men's thoughts back to questions of ecclesiastical polity and government. The English speaking peoples have taken a leading part in the modern missionary enterprise, but that enterprise has remained the outcome rather of the piety than of the theology of the Church, and till recent years there has been little interest in the problem which it creates for Christian thought.

Even in Germany, where speculative problems are more eagerly discussed, the question which Schleiermacher raised on the relation to religion of the ' positive ' religions for long received but slight attention. Hegelianism spoke of Christianity as the ' absolute ' religion in that it was the ' synthesis ' of the ' antitheses ' found in the non-Christian religions. But in so far as religions were regarded as illustrations of ideas, the interest

[1] For a brief sketch of its development, cp. the writer's *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, pp. 160-226.

was more theoretical than concrete. The absoluteness of Christianity did not necessarily denote its actual truth. Its importance lay in this : in its doctrine of the Godman it provided the most adequate symbol of the philosophic truth of the unity of God and man.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the dominant theology in Germany was Ritschlianism. To Ritschl the Church owes a debt which is often forgotten in the present reaction from his influence. Hegelianism had led, on the one hand, to the formulation of elaborate orthodoxies which obscured the simplicity of the Christian message, and, on the other hand, to a destructive criticism which reduced the Christian facts to transient illustrations of philosophical ideas, and thus made of Christianity a refined mythology. Against all such intellectualism, whether of the right or of the left, Ritschl opposed his reduced and Christocentric theology in which all was based on the revelation of God in Christ as known and appropriated by the corporate faith of the Christian Church.

In his extreme concentration on the prime meaning of Christianity, Ritschl refused to discuss the significance of non-Christian religions, or to attempt to relate the Gospel to their aspirations, and in this he was followed by Herrmann, his great disciple. These two great theologians rendered an immeasurable service to a Church which needed much their reminder of the central simplicities of Christianity. But subsequent history has shown the impossibility of thus ignoring the problems raised by the modern contact of religions. And in the writings of some

of the later Ritschlians we can discern the deeper understanding of Christianity to which the study of non-Christian religions can lead.[1]

## The 'Religio-Historical' Solution.

It is significant that it has been from some of the younger Ritschlians that the modern Religio-historical school has gained its most influential adherents. In violent reaction from early Ritschlianism, this school presents Christianity, not in isolation, but as one phase of the religious achievement of the race. The school has been more active in scholarship than in theology, and its scholars have sought to eliminate the distinctiveness of Christianity by deriving its central message from the influence on St. Paul and his Gentile converts of the paganism of their environment, and especially of the Mystery-cult of the 'dying and risen' God.[2] But the school has had one great systematic thinker, Troeltsch, whose book on *The Absoluteness of Christianity* has become the inevitable starting-point of most recent discussion on the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions.[3]

[1] e.g., the enrichment of the conception of Christianity in J. Kaftan's later books, due, as he tells us (*Zeitschrift fur Theologie und Kirche*, July, 1908) to his study of the religions of redemption and his realization thereby that Christianity was not only an ethical religion, but a religion which redeems from the pressure of the temporal.

[2] The attempt is described at length in the writer's *The Gospel of St. Paul, A Reinterpretation in the Light of the Religion of his Age and Modern Missionary Experience*, 1928.

[3] 1st edition, 1902. 2nd edition, 1912. Its argument is summarized by the writer in his article on "The Finality of the Christian Religion" (*London Quarterly Review*, October, 1922), and in his chapter on "Christianity and other Religions," in *The Future of Christianity*, 1927. Longer accounts are given in Bouquet, *Is Christianity the Final Religion?* 1921, and Sleigh, *The Sufficiency of Christianity*, 1923.

The customary claim for the absoluteness of Christianity, Troeltsch regards as mere *naïveté*. History knows nothing of absolutes, nor does it discover in the past anything that can be called the essence of Christianity. At the beginning, Christianity was defined by the eschatological ideas of Judaism, so that its ethics were one-sided and unduly dominated by the thought of the end of the world. When Christianity freed itself from this bondage, it was only to be linked up with Greek philosophy and ethics. Nowhere does Christianity appear as an absolute religion, free from the limits of its place and age. At all times, it has been a purely historical phenomenon, limited and conditioned as other religions are.

Thus, to Troeltsch, the historical is necessarily the relative. Yet he will not admit that his conclusions involve an unlimited relativism. In relative phenomena, there may be traced a tendency towards the absolute, for history does not reject norms, and inevitably passes to judgments of value. And it is a mistake to suppose that there is a boundless mass of conflicting values. At the lower stages of culture, there does appear to be an infinite diversity, but this is only external. Actually there is great monotony. Only in the higher stages of culture do we meet with the creative forces of the inner life, and the irruption of these forces are but rare. Those who have had anything new to say to their fellows are not many, and the ideas on which humanity has had to live are surprisingly few.

The history of religions, then, does not present us with a mass of religious forces among which

choice is impossible. The lower phases of religion are irrelevant to our quest, and the higher polytheisms are restricted in their influence to the countries of their origin. Historical religions of more than local meaning are not numerous, and these fall into two clearly marked divisions. We have Judaism and Islām, which are predominantly legal,[1] and Hinduism and Buddhism, which are religions of redemption. Each type has its distinctive strength and weakness. The legal religions proclaim a God whose will is known, and must be obeyed, but they fail to bring to their followers redemption from the world. The redemptive religions seek to bring the world and man into unity with God, but, in doing so, they empty the idea of God of all positive meaning. Christianity alone proclaims a personal and living God who unites us to Himself. Christianity is thus not only the climax ; it is the converging point of the two great types of historical religions.

Beyond this Troeltsch refused to go. We cannot prove that Christianity is the final climax of religion. All men's deepest needs have so far been fulfilled in it, but, in the same way as some of the demands it meets are demands it has disclosed, it is possible that if a higher revelation came, it might disclose needs as yet unfelt. We may not then speak of the 'unsurpassability' of Christianity. Yet Troeltsch claims that what he has gained is sufficient for the devoutest faith. We are Christians, not because of theories of the absoluteness of Christianity, but because nowhere else can we find God so well as in the

[1] To these Zoroastrianism might have been added.

life-world of the Jewish prophets and of Christianity, and of that whole life-world Jesus is at once the source and symbol. We need not trouble ourselves about future millennia of human history. It is enough that we can see the next step of our way and know thereby our need and duty. In this way we can be saved from the religious chaos and desolation which threaten the world on every side.

Troeltsch's book naturally led to an animated controversy. As Grützmacher pointed out, Christian faith has seen in the forgiveness and new life which have come through God's revelation in Jesus Christ a gift which will not be surpassed on God's side, because it meets the deepest needs of men—needs which it has no reason to suppose will ever change. The experience of Christ leads inevitably to the confession that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life of all the world. Even the possibility that this was not so would make the Christian experience uncertain—indeed, non-existent. If Christ is not the Lord of the world for all men, why should I subordinate myself to Him as my Lord? If He does not belong to the future, why to the past or the present? It is the nature of Christian faith to form absolute judgments. This *naïveté*, as Troeltsch puts it, belongs to the essence of Christian faith, and, if this be removed, faith itself is lost.[1]

In his full and incisive discussion, Ihmels likewise complained that Troeltsch so little realized the difference between saying, 'I can nowhere

[1] *Eigenart und Probleme der positiven Theologie*, 1909, p. 36.

find God so well as in the life-world of the prophets and of Christianity,' and saying, 'I have truly found God,' that in one place he puts the two expressions side by side as if they were identical. But between the two expressions there is a difference which is fundamental. It is one thing to believe that in Christ we have the perfect revelation of God; it is another to believe that as Troeltsch puts it, Christianity is for us, and up to the present, the most perfect form of religion.[1] As Ihmels says in another book, it is the difference between intercourse with God and communion with Him.[2] We have intercourse with many men whom we only partly know, and in all religions men have intercourse with God. Communion is possible only with the few we really know and trust. It is the claim of Christianity to be the one religion of true communion with God—a communion mediated by Jesus Christ, in whom God is made known. Because of this, it is inherent in Christian faith to see in the coming of Christ something unique and explicable.

These criticisms seem justified. Troeltsch's solution is an impossible compromise. And this Troeltsch himself came in part to realize, and later questioned the usefulness of Christian missions to Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Islām.[3] The exclusion is significant, and shows how different is the view that Christianity is the highest of extant religions from the classic Christian confidence that Christ is the one perfect and

[1] *Die christliche Wahrheits-gewissheit*[2], 1914, pp. 160-86.
[2] *Centralfragen der Dogmatik in der Gegenwart*, 1911, p. 46.
[3] *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1913, II. pp. 779-804.

universal Saviour. In a lecture written shortly before his death, Troeltsch explicitly restricts to the West 'the validity' of Christianity. For us 'the only religion we can endure is Christianity, for Christianity has grown up with us, and has become part of our being.' 'It is God's countenance as revealed to us; it is the way in which, being what we are, we receive, and react to, the revelation of God.' 'Other racial groups, living under different conditions, may experience their contact with the Divine Life in quite a different way.' We have a missionary duty to 'heathen races' which are 'being morally and spiritually disintegrated by the contact with European civilizations,' but we have no reason to suppose that there will be any 'conversion or transformation' from the great cultural religions to Christianity. The best that we can hope for is 'a measure of agreement and of mutual understanding.'[1]

It has seemed worth while to deal at some length with Troeltsch's views as nowhere else can we find so clear a statement of our modern problem. His attempt to prove the superiority of Christianity to other religions seems rather to show the impossibility of any such 'proof.' His division of the higher religions into the two types of legal and redemptive is suggestive, but inadequate. Judaism was 'redemptive' as well as 'legal.' Islām, as the Sūfī movement reminds us, has seen in God not a Law-giver only, but the One Reality. Hinduism and Buddhism are in

[1] From *Christianity and World Religions*, a lecture prepared for delivery at Oxford, and published in *Christian Thought*, 1923.

some of their phases ethical and legal. Yet the division may serve to remind us of the two great tendencies in non-Christian religions. We cannot 'prove,' as Troeltsch earlier sought to do, that Christianity is their climax and their converging-point, for our judgments in this sphere are necessarily judgments of value. To us, because we are Christians, communion with a personal God seems the highest form of religion. A Hindu will not so judge, who sees in the extinction of personality life's highest aim.

The history of religions can provide us with data ; it can pass no judgment on their values. If we believe in the destined universality of Christianity, it is not because of a comparison of religions. It is a judgment of faith, an expression of our experience of the adequacy of the Christian Gospel.

Although history cannot prove the truth of the finality of Christianity, we may expect that if the claim be true, it will find in history its confirmation. The great religions are expressions of the varied needs of man. If Christianity be destined to universality, then it will meet the aspirations to which these religions witness. And as we turn to the study of non-Christian religions, we may be saved from a merely Western view of Christianity, and as, with others' needs in mind, we seek to explore anew the contents of the Christian Gospel, we may discover in it aspects which before we have ignored. If Christ be all men's Lord, then in Him will be found the answer to the needs, not of the West alone, but of the East.

## II

## THE NATURE OF THE DIVINE

Fundamental to any religion is its conception of the Divine. As early Buddhism reminds us, a religion can exist without belief in a supreme God, but there can be no religion without the realization of a supersensible and sacred Reality which arouses in man the sense of awe. To the fact of such a Reality all religions bear their witness, but in their conception of its nature they differ much. Even in the same religion we shall find descriptions of the Divine, which are not incongruous only, but self-contradictory. Such descriptions correspond to what men feel to be their experience of the universe, and that takes many a form. Of the origin of man's belief in the Divine, it does not fall to us to speak. It is the purpose of this chapter to summarize the dominant conceptions of the Divine in some of the Living Religions of the East, and briefly to indicate the conception of God which is inherent in the Christian belief in God's revelation of Himself in Christ.

### In Chinese Religion.

Of the conception of the Nature of the Divine in Chinese religion we need speak but briefly. The distinctive contribution of indigenous Chinese thought has been to ethics rather than to religion, and it is from Buddhism that China has won its more vivid representations of the Divine.

It is significant that the *Five Classics* held in religious veneration are not religious books in the ordinary sense. One is a mysterious book of divination ; the other four are primarily concerned with secular affairs. Yet in these books there is to be discerned not only fear of evil spirits, but the recognition of divine beings, greatest of whom is Shang-ti or Tien. The origin and meaning of this conception are still obscure. Shang-ti, though the greatest, was not the only God, and it is possible, as Grube holds, that the honour given to Shang-ti, or Heaven, is to be explained as part of the worship of the forces of nature of which Heaven was the most powerful and the most august.[1] Other scholars follow Legge, the translator of the Chinese Classics, in holding that the worship of Shang-ti or Tien is to be interpreted as a primitive monotheism, and this view has recently received strong support from so distinguished a student of religion as Archbishop Söderblom who argues that here, and here alone, in the history of religions do we find a primitive monotheism.[2] The origin of this conception of Shang-ti, Heaven, is of less importance than its close association with that of the moral order. ' It is virtue that moves Heaven ' ; on the wicked Heaven ' sends down calamities.'[3]

Ancient and elevated as was this conception of Shang-ti or Tien, it failed to attract popular

[1] *Religion und Kultus der Chinesen,* pp. 19-31. For De Groot's theory that even at this early stage, Chinese religion was a polytheistic and polydæmonistic dualism, see *L. R. E.,* p. 149.

[2] *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens,* pp. 224-69.

[3] *Shu King* ii. 2, 3., iv. 4. 2.

devotion. If the worship of Shang-ti was indeed a primitive monotheism, it was a monotheism which lacked prophets who could so proclaim the will of God as to make His worship the concern of ordinary men. The Emperor alone sacrificed to Heaven ; popular piety had for its chief interest the cult of ancestors.

The ideals these ancient books express found their embodiment in Confucius.[1] He was one more interested in right conduct than in religion, and the *Analects*, which preserve his words, contain much wise advice on good behaviour, but concerning the Divine they say very little. ' Spiritual beings ' were one of the subjects ' on which the Master did not talk.' ' To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.'[2] The most influential of the disciples of Confucius, Mencius,[3] showed still less interest in religion. It was works, not faith, which he enjoined.

We have in these two great teachers of China an illustration of the sober wisdom and the high-ethical ideals to which the long stability of Chinese civilization may be in part assigned. But not even in China have men succeeded in living without reliance on divine powers. For lack of a vivid sense of Heaven's power and wisdom, the place He might have had was filled by a multiplicity of divine and demonic beings, whilst from Buddhism China received a rich

[1] 551-478 B.C.
[2] vii. 20 and vi. 20.
[3] 371-288 B.C.

array of gods and goddesses whose worship met the needs which Confucianism could not satisfy.

### In Hinduism.

In India there has been a keen interest in the unseen and an eager quest to discover the Nature of the Divine. The Divine has been called by many a name, and conceived by symbols sometimes exalted and sometimes degraded. Yet with none of these have the seers of India been content. From very early times they have sought to find the One behind the many.

The *Rigveda* is here of special interest. No longer, indeed, can we speak with Max Müller of 'the primeval simplicity' of these ancient hymns.[1] Behind the *Rigveda*, there lies a vast, if dim, religious history, and many of its hymns are not the naïve expression of 'the childish age of the human mind,' but highly complex poems composed by professional and well-paid poets. Yet in some of their conceptions can be seen, however faintly, the influence of the early nature-worship. Heaven and Earth are still worshipped as the parents of all. There is the much-praised Indra whose struggle with the dragon depicts the liberation of the monsoon rains on which the fertility of the land depends. Associated with him in the mid-air, are the god of wind and the gods of the storm. Of earth-gods, there is Agni, the sacrificial fire, Soma, the sacred and intoxicating drink beloved by gods as well as men, and Yama, the first man, who became the ruler of the dead. In the bright heaven are the Sun-God,

[1] *India: What can it teach us?* 1899 edition, p. 108.

Savitar or Surya, and Ushas, the fair goddess of the Dawn, whom daily he pursues. Here, too, reign the sublime Âdityas, of whom Varuna is chief.

In this conception of Varuna we have the first and greatest approximation in Hinduism to a truly ethical monotheism. Varuna's prime concern is with the preservation of the order of the universe. All wrong deeds are offences against him, and his eyes behold even the most secret sins. Through sin men lose his fellowship, and incur his penalties. As Dr. Macdonell points out, every hymn 'addressed to Varuna contains a prayer for the forgiveness of sin.'[1] But the hymns to Varuna are very few. 'The vast majority of the Vedic hymns are not concerned in the remotest degree with questions of morals. The chief requirement for man, in the opinion of the poets, is not that he should be good or be conscious of sin and attain forgiveness, but that he should have faith in the gods and pay them their honours due, nor should he fail in so doing to remember his obligation towards the priest, who alone can rightly perform the sacrifice for him and create the hymn of praise.'[2] As Dr. Griswold puts it, 'Before the end of the Vedic period, Varuna had become a petty godling, lord of the waters; and all the priceless promise of that early faith had been completely lost to India. We have here, as he says, 'a religious tragedy of the utmost gloom and disaster.'[3] Of the thousand and more hymns which make up the *Rigveda*,

[1] *Hymns from the Rigveda*, p. 21.
[2] A. B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, I. p. 249.
[3] *The Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 373.

nearly one half are devoted to Indra the genial, kindly and often drunken god, and to Agni, the god of the sacrificial fire.

It seems clear that the worship of many gods failed in the end to satisfy. Instead of finding in Varuna a God, not holy only, but of sole supremacy, and thus reaching out to a true monotheism, the thought of India sought the One behind the many. Thus in one of the earliest of the philosophic hymns, the poet declares in lines often quoted in India to-day :

> 'They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutmān.
> To what is One, sages give many a title: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātarisvan.'[1]

In the famous philosophical hymns of the last book of the *Rigveda*, the attempt is made to explore the meaning of this One to whom 'sages give many a title.'[2] It is here that we have the continuity of Indian thought. The gods change, but henceforth the seers of India have sought to find the One behind the many. That quest was not ethical but speculative; the search was not for a God holy and supreme, but for the ultimate principle of being, in which was to be found the explanation of all existence.

This quest was continued even during the dreary period of the *Brāhmanas*, and many attempts were made aptly to name the nameless

[1] *R.-V.* I. 164, 46. The first book of the *R.-V.*, though, in general, earlier than the tenth, is later than books II-IX.

[2] cp. *R.-V.* x. 72, 81, 82, 90, 121, 129. For a brief description of these hymns see *L. R. E.* pp. 22-5, and for a fuller account *R. H. C.* pp. 32-9.

Reality. At length, two names were used which became of decisive importance for later Indian thought. It was an age of priestly pre-eminence in which to the ' brahman,' the priestly prayer or spell, there was assigned theurgic power. By a not unnatural transition, Brahman was used by some to describe the creative principle of the universe from which even the gods were created.[1] Others spoke of this principle as the Ātman, the wind or breath, which was regarded as the principle both of the universe and of man. These two answers were brought together, and in one passage in the *Brāhmanas* the reader is bidden to meditate both on the Brahman and the Ātman, and to discover in his self the great Self of the universe.[2]

In the time of the *Upanishads* this obscure surmise was transformed into a great message of redemption. It was an age of restless speculation, when, not priests alone, but nobles were absorbed in the quest for final truth. That quest had become of more than speculative interest. The doctrine of transmigration and of *karma* was by now an axiom of Indian thought, and there were many who were seeking for some way of release from the cycle of rebirth. Greatest of all of these was Gautama, the Buddha, of whom we shall have later to speak. Within Hinduism there were those who found in the doctrine of the oneness of the self with Brahman-Ātman a message of liberation.

The *Upanishads* are not in any formal sense books on philosophy. Later, the great Vedantic teacher, Sankarāchārya, sought to reduce their

[1] *Sat. Br.* xi. 2, 3, 1-4.
[2] *Sat. Br.* x. 6. 3.

views to unity by interpreting many of their statements as belonging to the realm of nescience, or lower knowledge, in contrast to that realm of true knowledge for which the Brahman-Ātman alone is real. Some European scholars have sought, like him, to find in the *Upanishads* the teaching of the later Vedānta.[1] But the *Upanishads* do not recognize this distinction of a higher and a lower knowledge. Their writers were not consistent thinkers. The prime interest of these venerable books is not so much speculative as religious. It is impossible to express their teaching by any single formula.

Although the doctrine of the unity of the self with Brahman is only one of many views taught in the *Upanishads*, it is this doctrine which gives to these books their special interest. For some of these ancient thinkers this doctrine brought not only a mystic rapture, but the sense of emancipation from the bondage of past deeds. Thus a famous verse in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* declares :

> 'The seer sees not death,
> Nor sickness, nor any distress.
> The seer sees only the All,
> Obtains the All entirely.'[2]

whilst in a parallel passage in the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* it is taught :

[1] So especially Deussen in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads*. For a criticism of his view, see H. Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Aufänge des Buddhismus*, pp. 59-105, and A. B. Keith, *op. cit.* ii. 509 ff.

[2] vii. 26, 2.

'By the mind alone is It to be perceived.
There is on earth no diversity.
He gets death after death,
Who perceives here seeming diversity.

As a unity only is It to be looked upon—
This undemonstrable, enduring Being,
Spotless, beyond space,
The unborn Soul, great, enduring.'[1]

Thus the Brahman or Ātman is indescribable. 'It is not this, it is not that' (*neti, neti*). And whoso knows this is free from the effect of deeds. 'What he has done and what he has not done do not affect him.' Such a one cannot be 'stained by evil action.' 'Evil does not overcome him; he overcomes all evil.' 'Verily that great unborn Soul, undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless, is Brahman. Verily, Brahman is fearless. He who knows this becomes the fearless Brahman.'[2]

These thinkers are more interested in release than in the Nature of the Divine. In some places there is, indeed, an approach to Theism. Instead of the neuter Brahman, we find used the masculine Brahmā, whilst Ātman is extolled as the creator and sustainer of the world, and, as such, is held to be responsible for the good and evil deeds of men. He 'causes him whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds, to perform good actions.' He 'causes him whom he wishes to lead downward, to perform bad action. He is the world-protector. He is the world-sovereign. He is the lord of all. He is my self.'[3] The relation of the

[1] iv. 4. 19 f. [2] *Brih. Up.* iv. 4. 22, 23, 25.
[3] *Kaush. Up.* iii. 8.

world to God is variously described. At times the world is regarded as Brahman's creation[1] ; at other times, as an extension and modification of him. Elsewhere there is implied the later doctrine of the Vedānta that the whole created order is an illusion (*māyā*)[2] ; Brahman is the sole reality, and only because of It are the relationships of life to be cherished.[3]

We have then in these ancient works no unified conception of the Nature of the Divine. Their value lies, not in the teaching they impart, but in their witness to the reality of the eternal, and their quest for a God whom they yet declared to be unknown. The doctrine of transmigration and *karma* came to be regarded as axiomatic, and from that time on has been the logical *prius* of all Indian thought. But if every deed thus binds its doer by the chain of its effect, what of the activity of God ? If God be active, will not He too fall under the dreaded karmic law ?

It is this problem which controls the whole development of later Hindu thought on the Nature of the Divine. Three attempts to solve that problem are of supreme importance—that of the compiler of the *Bhagavadgītā*, of Sankarāchārya, and of Rāmānuja—and it is to these attempts that we have now to turn.

The distinctive contribution of the *Bhagavadgītā*[4] to Indian religion lies in its attempt to unite the tenets of philosophy with the practice of popular worship. The attributeless Brahman-

[1] *Chhand. Up.* vi. 2. [3] *Svet. Up.* iv. 10.
[2] *Brih. Up.* ii. 4 and iv. 5.
[4] The date of the *Gītā* is unknown. It may be tentatively given as about A.D. 100.

Ātman of the *Upanishads* is here associated with the Vishnu of the temple cult. Of Vishnu, manifested on Krishna, we shall have to deal when, in the next chapter, we pass to the Manifestation of the Divine. Here it must suffice to show how this famous and influential book deals with the problem of the relation of the activity of God to the karmic law. God, the book declares, is a doer of works and yet no worker. Works defile Him not, because in Him there is no longing for fruit of works.[1] By this conception of 'selfless' activity the poem is able to speak of God as active, and, at the same time, to deny that He is enmeshed in the effects of His activity. Yet we have no stable theism. The attempt to combine popular piety with the tenets of speculation leads to radical inconsistency. The God who, the poem declares, loves men and is loved by the man of knowledge, is described also as a God veiled by illusion (*māyā*), and known to none; a God who is indifferent to all born beings, so that there is none whom He hates, and none whom He loves.[2]

First in Sankarāchārya's great commentary[3] do we find an adequate attempt to reduce to one coherent system the conclusions of speculation and the postulates of popular devotion. Sankara's work has had great influence and is by many held to be *the* Vedānta—the perfected outcome of the

[1] *B. G.* iv. 13 f.

[2] cp. vii. 17, with vii. 25 f. and ix. 29.

[3] Sankara's birth is traditionally assigned to A.D. 788. He is believed to have died in his thirty-second or thirty-eighth year. His great commentary on the *Sūtras* of Bādarāyana is available in Thibaut's translation (*S. B. E.* xxxiv. and xxxviii). A brief summary is given in *R. H. C.*, pp. 78-97.

teaching of the *Upanishads*. As we have seen, Sankara resolves the antinomies of the *Upanishads* by the category of a twofold knowledge, a higher knowledge and a lower (*parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā*) or, as he elsewhere puts it, a knowledge (*vidyā*) and a nescience (*avidyā*).

From the point of view of esoteric knowledge there is but one reality—Ātman or Brahman which, as subject and not object, is essentially unknowable. By three terms may the Brahman be described. Brahman is being (*sat*); Brahman is intelligence (*chit*); Brahman is bliss (*ānanda*). These attributes mean less than they appear. Brahman as intelligence is not the knower, but the knowing, not the cogniser, but the cognition. The 'bliss' is the bliss of insensibility, a bliss whose nearest human analogy is the bliss of deep and dreamless sleep. Thus these attributes are negative in meaning. Because of the absence of duality, Brahman can never be known. He is to be described as the *Upanishads* teach, as 'not this,' 'not that' (*neti, neti*). In illustration of this teaching Sankara narrates how a sage answered one who questioned him on the nature of Brahman. 'Learn Brahman, O friend,' said the sage, and was silent. Again and yet again the inquirer asked what Brahman was. At last the sage made answer, 'I am teaching you, but you do not Bnderstand. Silent is that self.'[1]

It is not easy to see how this attributeless Brahman is to be related to the created world and to the needs of religion. Sankara teaches that the creative activity of Brahman was 'mere sport.'

[1] *Vedāntasūtras* III. 2. 17.

Only to the illusion of ignorance is this world real. From the standpoint of the lower knowledge, there exist gods—greatest of whom is Īsvara the Lord—and the individual souls of men. But all these belong to that karmic order which to true knowledge is unreal. For the man to whom knowledge has come there is but one reality—the unknowable Brahman.

It is impossible to read Sankara's great commentary without realizing the consummate skill with which he seeks to unify the disparate interests of speculation and religion. But for that unity religion pays a heavy price. Devotion to the gods and fulfilment of the demands of duty have meaning only for the unillumined. For the man of knowledge, the unknowable and attributeless Brahman alone is real ; all else belongs to the sphere of nescience and unreality.

Such a conclusion could not satisfy all even of the philosophers ; and we find in Rāmānuja[1] a valiant attempt to give to the *Upanishads* a more theistic meaning 'We know from Scripture,' he writes, 'that there is a Supreme Person whose nature is absolute bliss and goodness, who is fundamentally antagonistic to all evil ; who is the cause of the origination, sustentation, and dissolution of the world ; who differs in nature from all other beings, who is all-knowing, who, by His mere thought and will, accomplishes all His purposes, who is an ocean of kindness, as it were, for all who depend on Him ; whose name

[1] His date is given as A.D. 1050-1137. Thibaut's translation of Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Vedāntasūtras* forms vol. xlviii. of the *S. B. E.*

is the highest Brahman.'[1] Yet in dealing with the creation of the world, Rāmānuja likewise asserts that the highest Brahman made, or rather, 'arranged' the world in motiveless sport.[2] Like Sankara, Rāmānuja assumes that God must be without motive or desire. Otherwise He too would fall under the karmic law.

A people so deeply religious as are the Hindus, could not be content to worship a mere abstraction. There is a deeply significant story told by Tulsī Dās in his Hindī version of the *Rāmāyana*. A man goes to a seer to ask how God is to be worshipped. 'The great saint, being himself a philosopher, began a sermon on Brahman, the unbegotten, the indivisible, the immaterial, the sovereign of the heart, unchangeable, unwishful, nameless, formless . . . identical with yourself, you and he being as absolutely one as wave and water; so the *Vedas* declare.' But the man replied, 'The worship of the impersonal laid no hold of my heart.'[3] The inadequacy of the classic Hindu conception of the Nature of the Divine is here exposed. Men have sought personal gods to trust and love. They have conceived of these in various ways, and in their worship of them they have spoken as if the gods to whom they prayed were real. Sometimes, as in the Saiva Siddhānta, the attempt has been made to speak as if the supreme God, too, was both real and loving. Yet, in general, heart and head have been in opposition. Trust in a personal God or gods has lacked the confirmation of philosophy. The belief in

[1] On iv. 4. 32. [2] On ii. 1. 33.
[3] Book VII, *Dohā* 107, with *Chaupāi* following.

*karma* has made all that is active seem unreal, and the attempts to win a personal object of devotion concern, not the Nature of the Divine, but its Manifestation. It will be convenient therefore to leave to the next chapter our brief description of these attempts.

In Buddhism.

The beginnings of Buddhism belong to the age of the *Upanishads* and the teaching of its founder can only be understood as we remember the eager desire for deliverance from *karma* and transmigration which marked that age. There were many who sought a 'path' or 'ford' across the ocean of transmigration. Some hoped to find way by knowledge; others by austerities. It was an age of much interest in speculation and there were many who counted no sacrifice too great if they could win the boon of emancipation. Greatest of all these seekers was Gautama.[1]

Behind the legends which have gathered around him, it seems possible to discern the gracious figure of one who like many others of his age abandoned home and comfort that he might win freedom from the misery of rebirth. He went at first to two of the most famous teachers of the time. He found that their teaching could lead him to the 'realm of nothingness' or to 'the realm of neither perception nor yet non-perception,' but it did not lead him to 'aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, knowledge, supreme wisdom, and *Nirvāna*.'[2] The peace he

[1] His date is commonly given as 560-480 B.C. Rhys Davids puts his birth forty years earlier (*Buddhism*, p. 90).

[2] *W. B. T.*, pp. 335, 338.

had failed to win by the way of knowledge, he sought by the way of austerity. But still peace did not come, and, to the disgust of the ascetics who had watched with admiration his almost complete abstinence from food, he abandoned that way also. At length, as he meditated beneath the Bo-tree, he gained the illumination, which not only made him the Buddha, the Enlightened One, but gave him a message to proclaim, which to many has seemed a message of deliverance bringing joy and calm.

Yet how strange was that message which the Buddha preached. The illumination through which he won his peace was not the discovery of a heavenly Father's love, but of a complex scheme of Dependent Origination,[1] which gives no place to the activity of God. We seem to have here a strange paradox—a religion without a God. Some have denied that primitive Buddhism is a religion at all, and a generation or two ago Buddhism was often held up to the admiration of the Western world as providing what modern men required—an ethic unencumbered by the thought of God. Thus Gautama was extolled as an early rationalist interested only in human conduct ; a founder of a religion who himself had no religion. Such a presentation seems to be due to a misconception. If Gautama was a rationalist, his rationalism was yet, as Prof. de la Vallée Poussin points out, 'a qualified, an Indian rationalism.'[2] Though early Buddhism ignored God, it yet retained and utilized many of the popu-

[1] For this scheme see *L. R. E.* pp. 117-24.
[2] *The Way to Nirvana*, p. 33.

lar beliefs of its age ; it recognized the existence of gods and of paradises and hells, and treated as efficacious both ecstasies and magic.

That Gautama ignored the existence of a supreme God does not mean that we cannot call early Buddhism a religion. The essential element in religion, as Archbishop Söderblom reminds us, is not a developed faith in God nor worship. It is the idea of the holy, 'Tabu-holy, that is distinctive for religion.' And this the early Dialogues reveal. 'The kernel in them is this: that in the wastes of life Gautama has discovered oases which are marked off from the misery and pain of existence, as the Holy with its rich content is in contrast to the profane. The Master points out to the man who seeks redemption the three Refuges of the *Buddha*, *Dharma* (Law) and *Sangha* (Community), and behind the miserable chain of cause and effect of existence lies the eternal peace of *Nirvāna*.[1] So although early Buddhism formulated no faith in God, because it retained the sense of the Holy, it is rightly described as a religion.

Although early Buddhism ignored or denied the existence of a supreme God, it yet so moralized the principle of retribution as to give it a signifi-

[1] *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, p. 211. So R. Otto, *West-Östliche Mystik* p. 197 similarly describes early Buddhism as a religion even although it denies the existence of God. For 'it lives in the Numinous.' 'The salvation which is sought in Nirvana' is throughout magical-numinous. It can be described only by silence. It is the fascinating—blessed. It is only to be reached by the way of *negatio*, i.e., the *mirum ineffabile*. Yet the negation is here as in all mysticism, not the assertion of the Null. The Null is throughout rational, intelligible, definable. It is not ineffable ; it is nothing.' *Nirvāna* is the 'irrational mystic state.'

cance comparable to the just rule of God. In Hinduism *karma* had been concerned primarily with the effect of deeds. In the Buddhist Dialogues, reward has reference to motives. Men receive good or ill according as they planned. In this way, the law of *karma* becomes a kind of Providence, and there were provided moral sanctions, not quite unlike those given in the thought of a God who is the just and effective ruler of the world.

As we shall see in the next chapter, although early Buddhism ignored God, it did not lack ideas of the Manifestation of the Divine, and the Buddha who bade men turn away from the thought of God came to be regarded as the greatest of these Manifestations. At times, the early texts speak of him as a great teacher content to be himself forgotten if his teaching was remembered and obeyed. Yet, from the first, his followers gave him an obedience greater than any man can rightly claim, and even in early times there arose an estimate of him which made him more a god than a man. Later, in its Mahāyāna form, Buddhism saw in the historic Buddha, the greatest of the heavenly gods who claim men's praise. Thus in the *Lotus of the Good Law*,[1] Sākyamuni[2] is depicted as 'the God of gods.' Already has he lived through innumerable æons, and he is destined to live for innumerable æons more. Like the Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the Sākyamuni of the *Lotus* Scripture is for all the purposes of religion the supreme God. Yet to

[1] The *Saddharma-Pundarīka* E. T. in *S. B. E.* xxi.
[2] The title of Gautama common in the Mahāyāna texts.

philosophy the ultimate reality was 'emptiness.' 'What is form, that is emptiness. What is emptiness, that is form.' 'There is no knowledge, no obtaining, no not-obtaining of *Nirvāna*.'[1] The *Lotus* scripture is thus unable to assert the eternity and full godhead of the Buddha. For the purposes of religion, he is God. But to the philosopher the ultimate reality is 'emptiness' and thus a truer Theism is not attained.

A nearer approach to Theism is found in the simpler form of the Mahāyāna represented by the cult of Amitābha. In this phase of Buddhism, the historic Buddha is ignored, and devotion is directed to Amitābha, the Lord of that Western Paradise whose glories are described in words of glowing enthusiasm. The ideal here held up is not extinction, but union with Amitābha in his splendid heaven. Amitābha in his love for men has vowed not to enter *Nirvāna* until all are saved, and by trust in him salvation can be won. To-day no phase of Buddhism has such great influence in Japan as this, and the worship of Amitābha—in Japan called Amida—so closely resembles Christianity that some have supposed that it owes its origin to Christian influences.[2] However these influences may have helped to increase its later popularity, this form of Buddhism had its origin in the India of the first century of our era, and reflects ideas current there at that time. We have here a still further departure from primitive Buddhism. Gautama bade men seek deliver-

[1] The *Larger Prajnā-Paramitā-Hridaya Sūtra*, *S. B. E.* xlix. ii. p. 147 f.

[2] The worship of Amida came to Japan from China where Nestorian Christianity was for long influential.

ance, not by trust in God, but by obedience to his own teaching. Here Gautama is ignored, and the deliverance proclaimed is to be won, not by self-discipline but by trust in the mythic Lord of the Western Paradise, whose grace alone can save.

## In Zoroastrianism.

Zoroastrianism and Islām stand in striking contrast to the religions we have been studying. Hinduism and early Buddhism have for their chief concern, not the knowledge of a supreme God, but deliverance from life's sorrow and futility. Zoroastrianism and Islām are concerned, instead, with the supreme God whose will has been made known to men and must, at all costs, be obeyed.

In ancient India, as we have seen, the worship of Varuna, the august guardian of the moral law, gave way to that of Indra, the genial warriors' god. Both these gods were worshipped before the invasion of India with its consequent separation of the Indians from the Iranians. With the Iranians, there was a different development. Indra became a demon, whilst the Guardian of the moral law, here called Ahura Mazdāh, was elevated to the highest place. Of this God, Zoroaster was the prophet, and the ethical monotheism which India failed to reach was here attained.

Of the great reforming work of Zoroaster we know but little. Even his date is still uncertain.[1]

[1] Zoroastrian tradition dates his life from about 660-583 B.C. Dr. Moulton (*Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 17-22) and Dr. Dhalla (*Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 11) hold that he lived not later than the tenth century B.C.

But we have in the ancient *Gāthās*[1] a record of his teaching which enables us to form some conception of the message that he brought.

For Zoroaster, Ahura Mazdāh was the holy righteous Lord, and the all-creator. He it was 'that in the beginning thus thought, "Let the blessed realms be filled with lights"'; he 'that by the wisdom created Right.'[2] He knows of all the acts of men. 'Whatsoever open or secret things may be visited with judgment, or what man for a little sin demands the heaviest penalty—of all this through the Right thou art ware, observing them with flashing eye.'[3]

Sublime and stern as was Ahura Mazdāh, Zoroaster yet thought of Him with trust and intimacy. Thus when his mission brought him poverty and hardship, he could look to Ahura to give him not only 'the future gift of Welfare and Immortality,' but a present reward 'even ten mares with a stallion and a camel.'[4] He speaks of himself as the 'friend' of Ahura and not merely as his worshipper. All that he does is for His praise. So long as he has 'strength and power,' he will be the 'praiser' of Mazdāh[5] and he looks forward to being 'to all eternity,' 'beloved of God.'[6] Because Ahura Mazdāh was the sole and righteous God, Zoroaster felt that for himself and for all men there was but one great obligation: to serve the Truth (*Asha*) and to hate the Lie (*Druj*). He was ready to bring as an offering to

[1] These ancient poems are found in *Yasnas* xxviii-xxxiv, xliii-li and liii. They contain only some nine hundred lines.
[2] *Ys.* xxxi. 7. [3] *Ys.* xxxi. 13. [4] *Ys.* xliv. 18.
[5] *Ys.* l. 6. 10 f.
[6] *Ys.* xlix. 7. He includes his father-in-law in this hope.

Ahura Mazdāh even 'the life of his own body.'[1] In this world Right may seem defeated, but in the end, 'the Right shall smite the Lie,' and the man who prays to Ahura Mazdāh shall be exalted.[2]

In the *Gāthās*, the ancient nature-worship is transcended and a true monotheism attained. In the late *Avestā*, although Ahura Mazdāh is recognized as the supreme and holy God, his power is shared, and worship is given to lesser deities. Zoroaster had spoken of the Attributes of God in a half-personal way. These soon[3] came to be regarded as definite personalities, some male, some female. They were extolled as the Holy Immortals (*Amesha Spentas*) and became definitely six in number. In the later *Avestā*, even more important than these Archangels were the Angels (*Yazatas*) to whose worship the whole of the Book of *Yashts* is devoted. The help of these angels is invoked as if they were self-existent deities.[4] Greatest of them all is Mithra, but he was only one of very many. The heavenly Yazatas number 'hundreds and thousands.'[5] Though the supremacy of Ahura Mazdāh is formally retained, we are very near here to polytheism.

Zoroaster had ignored, not only the objects of nature worship, but also the ancestral spirits. The appeasement of these spirits seems to have been a prominent element in Iranian piety. In the

[1] *Ys.* xxxiii. 14. Moulton compares Rom. xii. i. Dhalla takes the words to mean 'giving up his life, i.e., being 'ready to die' for Ahura Mazdāh. [2] *Ys.* xlviii. 1.

[3] In the prose *Gāthā of the Seven Chapters* which, though later than the *Gāthās*, is earlier than the main body of the *Avestā*.

[4] cp. the *Yasht* devoted to Mithra (*Mihir Yasht S. B. E.* xxiii. pp. 119-58). [5] *Yt.* vi. 1.

period of the later *Avestā*, their worship was revived. These *Fravashis* are no longer only the spirits of the dead. Each living being of the good creation has a higher counterpart. Not only has every good man, as his guardian angel an immortal spirit, his ideal self, but the gods also have their *Fravashis* ; even Ahura Mazdāh has his.[1]

In the still later period of the Pahlavi writings there is a further departure from the monotheism of the *Gāthās*. Ahura Mazdāh—now called Ormazd—remains as the omnipotent and eternal God, but the secondary divine beings have an increased prominence. The Archangels now number seven, for Ormazd is regarded as their chief and they form with him a sort of heavenly council, each archangel being responsible for one of the seven worldly creations.[2] The appeasement of the *Fravashis*—now called Farohars—has become of urgent necessity. They are thought of as the souls of the dead, and it is perilous for any to omit to provide a feast for his dead relatives.[3]

We have seen how strongly Zoroaster emphasized the contrast between good and evil. The choice between the two which each man has to make was for him a re-enactment of the choice which had been made at the beginning between the two primal spirits 'The wise one chose aright, the foolish not so.' 'Of these twain spirits he that followed the Lie chose doing the worst things ; the holiest Spirit chose Right.'[4] In

[1] cp. *Yt.* xiii. the *Farvardin Yasht*.
[2] Of man, animals, fire, metal, earth, water and plants. cp. Dhalla *op. cit.* p. 227.
[3] e.g. *Sad Dar.* xiii (*S. B. E.*, xxiv. 273 ff).
[4] *Ys.* xxx. 3, 5.

one passage he describes this evil spirit as the enemy (*angra*). In the later *Avestā*, the evil spirit is regularly called Angra Mainyu. Whereas Ahura Mazdāh created only things that were good, Angra Mainyu counter-created things that were evil.[1] In the Pahlavi books there is a still closer approximation to dualism. Ormazd and Ahraman[2] are now said to have been two brothers in one womb.[3] Yet although the evil spirit is thus held to be as ancient as the supreme God, he is not eternal. His doom is certain, and the date of his defeat is already known to Ormazd. In the end, Ahraman and all his creations of evil will be destroyed, and Ormazd will reign in unchecked power.

Thus although Zoroaster was held in increasing honour, his simple message was largely forgotten. The rediscovery of the *Gāthās* in recent times has led to the attempt to revive the pure and vigorous teaching of Zoroaster, and thus to free the Pārsī community from the accretions of later ages. As a modern Pārsī scholar and high priest puts it, 'Let the Pārsī individually, and his community collectively, stand steadfast in the path of righteousness, and they will be practising true Zoroastrianism. In the fret and fever of modern civilization, which renders man exceedingly sensitive to suffering and lets loose on him the demons of restlessness and discontent, Zarathushtra's religion is the best sedative for him to-day. So will it be in all social unrests, economic crises, and

[1] *Vdd* I. (*S. B. E.* iv. p. 4 ff).
[2] The Pahlavi equivalents of Ahura Mazdāh and Angra Mainyu.
[3] e.g. *Dīnkart* (*S. B. E.* xxxvii. p. 242).

religious upheavals of the future. Zarathushtra has been the hope of the Pārsīs in the past. So he is now, and so will he be for ever.'[1] And Pārsīs have, indeed, good reason to be proud of the austere nobility of their prophet's message. But a monotheism, if it is to live, must be missionary, and the missionary zeal of Zoroaster is gone. Pārsīs do not desire fresh converts. Reformers complain of the lack of religious zeal in their community. Yet that is natural. It is hard to maintain faith in a living God, if faith in God be regarded as the concern of a small community, and not of the whole world.

In Islām.

It was by his powerful preaching of God's sole supremacy and utter power that Muhammad became the Founder of Islām. How he gained his sense of a mission we can only surmise. In Arabia there was the worship of many gods. The great world outside was nominally Christian, whilst even in Arabia itself Judaism and Christianity were already found. Arabia had had no prophet from God to declare His nature. Muhammad felt that he himself was called to this high task, and, in the name of Allāh,[2] he summoned his people to abandon their idolatry, and to worship Allāh alone.

Some modern scholars would have us see in Muhammad less the founder of a new religion, than a political genius who saw in the proclamation of a common faith a means of unifying the

[1] Dhalla *op. cit.* p. 371.

[2] *Allāh*, 'the God,' seems already to have been the name of the chief deity at Mecca.

scattered tribes of Arabia. Certainly Muhammad showed more of the characteristics of an Arab chieftain than of a religious leader, and, when he attained to political power, used it with extraordinary shrewdness. But it seems an exaggeration to assert that his interests were primarily political. As a recent writer remarks, 'If we read the *Qurān* at all sympathetically, we cannot but feel the trembling fear of the wrath of God that lay upon the heart of the man who composed it.'[1] God was one; God was omnipotent. He demanded from men an undivided service. This was Muhammad's central message, and it was this which made him the Prophet of Allāh.

The *Qurān* reveals not only Muhammad's awe of God, but his gratitude for God's goodness in creation. Thus it is God's creative power and generosity which he proclaims in the *Sūrah* with which, according to tradition, he began his public teaching.[2] The gratitude which man owes to God is a frequent theme in the *Qurān*.

'Aye! but man hath not yet fulfilled the bidding
of his Lord.
Let man look at his food:
It was we who rained down the copious rains
That cleft the earth with clefts,
And caused the upgrowth of the grain,
And grapes and healing herbs,
And the olive and the palm,
And enclosed gardens thick with trees,
And fruits and herbage,
For the service of yourselves and of your cattle.'[3]

[1] R. Bell, *The Origin of Islām in its Christian Environment*, p. 89. [2] *S.* xlvi. It is quoted in *L. R. E.* p. 198.
[3] *S.* lxxx. 24-32.

But although God is beneficent, He is stern. To the obedient shall be a rich reward ; to the disobedient a terrifying judgment. And this short and early *Sūrah* goes on to speak of the 'trumpet blast' of doom.

'On that day shall a man fly from his brother,
And his mother and his father,
And his wife and his children ;
For every man of them on that day his own concerns shall be enough.
There shall be faces on that day radiant,
Laughing and joyous :
And faces on that day with dust upon them :
Blackness shall cover them !
These are the Infidels, the Impure.'[1]

If God be all-powerful, whose fault is it if men rebel ? To this the *Qurān* gives no consistent answer. At times, the sins of men are explained by the deceit of the devil. At other times, even men's sins are assigned to God's determination. At the beginning of his mission, Muhammad spoke more of man's freedom and responsibility ; later he spoke as if all were due to the will of God.[2] The 'Decrees' of God rule everything. Some men turn aside from 'the Way.' But had God pleased, He could have guided them all aright.[3] God has fastened every man's fate about his neck.[4] Men must will, yet 'will it ye shall not, unless God will it, for God is knowing, Wise. He causeth whom He will to enter into his mercy. But for the evil doers, He hath made ready an afflictive chastisement.[5]

[1] *S.* lxxx. 33-42.
[2] cp. Goldziher *Vorlesungen über den Islām* p. 94.
[3] *S.* xvi. 9. [4] *S.* lxvii. 14. [5] *S.* lxxvi. 31 f.

Later Muslims often speak of the Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God. More than seventy of these are found in the *Qurān*, and the rest are derived from passages in it. These 'Beautiful Names' testify to Muhammad's sense not only of God's unity, power and knowledge, but of His justice and mercy. But, in general, the *Qurān* is more confident of God's majesty than of His undeviating love. Muhammad was a man of the desert, with its vast spaces and terrifying storms. He was certain of God's sole supremacy; he was less certain of the consistency of God's character. His awe of God did not save him from claiming special revelations to justify acts which were condemned even by the standards of Arab paganism,[1] or from claiming for himself concessions contrary to what he had enacted for his followers.[2] Yet, in spite of such defects in Muhammad's conception of God, it is impossible to read the *Qurān* without realizing the power and urgency of his message. His proclamation of one supreme God who must at all costs be obeyed helped to weld a medley of tribes into a nation, and to supply an enthusiasm which led to the vast extension of Islām into Christendom. It is a proclamation which still inspires in many a devotion showing itself in resignation to God's will, in prayer and almsgiving.

Greatly as Muhammad emphasized the tran-

[1] e.g. *S.* II. 214, on the raid in the sacred month of truce. *S.* iii. 37, on Muhammad's marriage to the wife of Zaid, his adopted son.

[2] Muslims may have only four wives; Muhammad as many as he would. *S.* xxxiii. 49-52.

scendence of God, His immanence was not forgotten. A later tradition asserts that when God created man from a lump of clay, he broke it into two parts, and throwing one into hell, said, 'These to eternal fire and I care not'; throwing the other into heaven He said, 'These to Paradise and I care not.'[1] And in the *Qurān* itself we find many references to God's absolute and capricious power.[2] Yet that is not the only tendency in Muhammad's thought. In an early *Sūrah* God is described as 'the Indulgent, the Loving.'[3] God is depicted not only as the sole God, but as the sole Reality. Allāh is closer to man than his 'neck-vein.'[4] The East and the West is God's; therefore, whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God.'[5] 'All on the earth shall pass away. But the face of thy Lord shall abide resplendent with majesty and glory.'[6]

It was these suggestions in the *Qurān* of the immanence of God which the Sūfīs[7] later developed. For many of them God was the sole reality and in an Islām secularized by prosperity and conquest, they sought by the renunciation of earthly joys to reach unity with the Divine. As al-Hallāj, an early martyr of this movement, declares :

> 'I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I.
> We are two spirits dwelling in one body.

[1] Sell, *The Faith of Islām*, p. 277.
[2] e.g., *S.* ii. 4 ff. *S.* vi. 125.
[3] *S.* lxxxv. 14.
[4] *S.* l. 15. [5] *S.* ii. 109. [6] S. lv. 25 f.
[7] The name Sūfī apparently comes from the coarse wool (*sūf*) worn by Christian monks. It is possible, as Goldziher suggests (*op. cit.* pp. 163 f), that the movement was indebted not only to Christianity and Neo-Platonism, but to Buddhism.

If thou seest me, thou seest Him,
And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both.'[1]

So he could claim 'I am God,' and for this claim was crucified. In later Sūfism we have still more emphatic assertions of unity with God. Thus Jalāluddīn[2] writes :

'O heart we have searched from end to end ; I saw in thee naught save the Beloved.
Call me not infidel, O heart, if I say "Thou thyself art He."'

Or again :

'Ye who in search of God, of God, pursue,
Ye need not search, for God is you, is you !
Why seek a something which was missing ne'er ?
Save you none is, but you are—where, O where ?'[3]

Yet even here the unity spoken of seems to be rather the unity of love than of essence. The immanence of God is strongly emphasized. It is doubtful if we have pantheism in the strict and formal sense.

Sūfism received more careful expression in the writings of al-Ghazzālī,[4] the most venerated of later Muslim teachers. A famous professor at Bagdad of Muslim theology, he grew dissatisfied with his knowledge, and felt the need 'of ecstasy and initiation.' He 'saw that one can only hope for salvation by devotion and the

[1] R. A. Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, p. 30. Dr. Nicholson suggests that the words translated "I am God" mean rather "I am the Creative Truth," and that only later did Sūfism become pantheistic. Hallāj suffered in 922 A.D.

[2] A.D. 1207-73.

[3] Nicholson, *Dīvāni Shamsi Tabrīz*, pp. 125 f.

[4] A.D. 1058-1111.

conquest of one's passions, a procedure which presupposes renouncement and detachment from this world of falsehood in order to turn towards eternity and meditation on God.'[1] He abandoned his position and his honours and after ten years of wandering found in Sūfism the peace he sought. 'I learnt,' he tells us, 'from a sure source that the Sūfīs are the true pioneers on the path to God; that there is nothing more beautiful than their life, nor more praiseworthy than their rule of conduct, nor purer than their morality.' 'To purge the heart of all that does not belong to God is the first step in their cathartic method. The drawing up of the heart by prayer is the keystone of it.' 'The last stage is the being lost in God. I say the last stage, with what may be reached by an effort of will; but, to tell the truth, it is only the first stage in the life of contemplation, the vestibule by which the initiated enter. From the time they set out on this path revelations come to them.' At last 'they rise by degrees to heights which human language cannot reach, which one cannot even indicate without falling into great and inevitable errors. The degree of proximity to Deity which they attain is regarded by some as intermixture of being, by others as identification, by others as intimate union. But all these expressions are wrong.' 'Those who have reached that stage should confine themselves to repeating the verse:

'What I experience I shall not try to say,
Call me happy, but ask me no more.'[2]

[1] *The Confessions of al Ghazzālī*, E.T. by C. Field, pp. 42 f.
[2] *op. cit.* p. 47.

Yet deeply as al-Ghazzālī prized the Sūfī quest for unity with God, with him the awe of God remained. It was the fear of the Fire which had led to his own conversion, and he believed that trust in the love of God did not remove the necessity of preaching the terrors of hell.[1]

The Sūfī movement is a reminder of the impossibility of bringing under any one head the ideas in Islām of the Nature of the Divine. As we have seen, even in the *Qurān* there is the recognition of God's nearness as well as of His distant majesty. As Prof. Macdonald reminds us, 'The shell that separates the Oriental from the Unseen is still very thin, and the charm or amulet of the magician may easily break it. The world of the *Arabian Nights* is still his world, and these stories for him are not tales from wonderland, but are rather to be compared to our stories of the wonders and possibilities of science.'[2] A large part of popular piety is concerned with devotion to the saints, the *walīs*, or 'associates' of God, whilst, as we shall see,[3] Muhammad is increasingly regarded as a mediator between God and man. The Wahhābīs[4] reject these later developments, and seek to revive that stern monotheism which was dominant in Muhammad's preaching. But, in general, the Muslim conception of God is not that of a remote and solitary Being. He is near,

[1] cp. D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology* p. 239.
[2] *Religious Attitude and Life in Islām*, p. 126.
[3] See later pp. 133 f.
[4] For this reforming sect which to-day is dominant in Arabia, see *L. R. E.* pp. 282 f.

and His presence and power are to be seen in the strange adventures of the saints.

### In Christianity.

Even the brief account we have given is sufficient to show the amazing diversity of men's conception of the Divine. Yet amid the many differences we can detect the predominance of two great types. In the one, as in Zoroastrianism and early Islām, God is regarded primarily as a Lawgiver whose will is known and must be obeyed; in the other, as in the Vedānta and the Sūfī movement, God is held to be the unknowable and infinite Reality and by the realization of identity with Him, redemption may be obtained.[1] The Christian conception of God differs from each of these two types, and yet has affinities with each. As the heir of Judaism, Christianity is connected with the first type, for Judaism conceived God as personal and known. Yet it meets the aspirations expressed by the second type, for it speaks of a communion with God, which means eternal life in time, and thus secures deliverance from the pressure of the temporal and finite.

Nowhere so clearly as in Judaism can there be seen the gradual development of the idea of a God who is righteous and whose will must be obeyed. Polytheism was expelled, and it was realized that for the Jews Jehovah alone was God. The conception of Jehovah as a tribal God was at first only partly ethicised. It has been said that the God of Islām ' notwithstanding

[1] cf. earlier pp.

the attributes of justice and mercy assigned to him, is capricious and remorseless—the God of the relentless desert which holds you in its grip, and may destroy you at any moment.'[1] The same complaint may be made against some of the early conceptions of God in the Old Testament. Thus when Uzzah puts out his hand to steady the tottering ark, he is slain by 'the anger of the Lord.'[2] But by the great teaching prophets the thought of God was freed from all that was arbitrary and pagan. Jehovah was the God, not of Israel only, but of the world. He was the creator of the universe and the guide of history. Hosea spoke of Him as a God of love, stern with love's sternness; Isaiah as the holy God, infinitely exalted; Jeremiah as the God, not of the nation only, but of the individual.

At the time of Christ there was a certain hardening in the thought of God. The trust of many devout Jews in God's grace found beautiful expression in the Book of Psalms, the hymn-book of the Jewish Church. Yet much of the theology of the time so exalted God above human affairs as to make His transcendence more obvious than His individual care of men. Jesus retained to the full the Jewish awe of God, the sense of His transcendent splendour. He bade men fear God and nothing and no one else, and to pray first, not for their own needs, or the needs of men, but for the hallowing of God's name, and the doing of His will. Yet, by the strange paradox of grace the awful, holy God

[1] Morgan, *The Nature and Right of Religion*, p. 58.
[2] Sam. vi. 6.

was now revealed as a God of love, the Father caring for His children's needs. Later teachers of the Church have spoken as if God were the attributeless absolute of Greek speculation, or a God of arbitrary will, predestinating men to salvation or destruction, whilst, in modern times, some have trivialized the thought of God by speaking as if His love were a weak sentimentality, caring more for men's comfort than their character. All such representations are alien from Christ's message. He spoke of a God whose holy will was not capricious; it was directed to the perfection of His Kingdom. And that Kingdom was not God's end alone, but man's. It was the highest good that men can win—the treasure which must be sought at any price.

God's grace to our Lord was primary. That grace was universal in its scope and individual in its application. He spoke of God as a father who cannot be content till the profligate son is restored to his filial place, as one who seeks the lost until he find it, like a woman who seeks the money which she cannot spare, or like a shepherd seeking the sheep, his own sheep, which has strayed from the fold. In our Lord's teaching of God we find a combination of utter awe and utter trust. He was certain of God's love, and yet spoke of it as a love which demands from men their very best. God was 'perfect,' and men have to strive to be perfect even as their Father was. As He preached, so He lived. He obeyed God's will, even though it led Him to the Cross, and even in the garden of His agony, and upon the Cross, He could call God Father.

We find the same note of awe and intimacy in the faith of the first Christian believers. To their amazed surprise, Jesus had risen from the dead. That great fact seemed to those who had followed Him in His lifetime the decisive proof that He was the Christ, the fulfilment of their Messianic hopes. The Easter message led to the joy and power of Pentecost. They felt with them the presence of God's Spirit. The New Age had dawned and eagerly they awaited its consummation. God had made 'both Lord and Christ' the Jesus whom the Jews had crucified.'[1] Only in Him was there salvation. There was no other name under heaven wherein men could be saved.[2]

With the conversion of St. Paul, the Church gained one who could interpret with a new adequacy the revelation of God in Christ. To Paul as a Jew, God had seemed the august avenger of all unrighteousness; a God whom he had feared, more than he had loved. In the fervour of his dialectic, St. Paul, at times, relapses into this pre-Christian view of God.[3] But in spite of the occasional traces in his thought of the influence of that stern school of Judaism in which he had been reared, it was his distinctive greatness that he did succeed in Christianizing his idea of God. God was now to him 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' the God whose grace had been revealed in Him. Before, he had believed that God was a God who needed to be

[1] Acts ii. 36.
[2] Acts iv. 12.
[3] e.g., in some passages in Rom. ix-xi. These chapters are discussed in the writers *The Gospel of St. Paul*, pp. 95-9, 243 ff.

reconciled. Now he knew that God had taken the initiative in reconciliation. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself' and had committed to the Church 'the word of reconciliation.'[1] 'God commendeth his own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'[2] Christianity was thus for him a religion universal in scope, because universal in meaning. It was a religion of forgiveness and new power. It brought deliverance not only from Sin and Death and demons, but from 'Law' and 'Wrath.' Through it men might be freed from every tyranny and be reconciled to God with a reconciliation which meant at once sonship with God, life 'in Christ,' and the possession of the Spirit.

We have here a radical transformation of the idea of God. No longer is God's glory conceived as that of an arbitrary despot, or of some stern and distant judge. 'The glory of God' had been seen 'in the face of Jesus Christ.'[3] God is as Jesus was. The holy love of the Cross is the holy love of God. We have 'the mind of Christ'[4]; we can interpret God by Him. So there came to Paul a confidence in God's love which no sorrow could destroy. In spite of all his difficulties and his disappointments, he was 'more than conqueror.' Nothing could separate him from the love of God in Christ.[5]

In the Johannine writings we find the same conception of God. 'No man hath seen God at any time.' Yet God may now be known.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 19. [2] Rom. v. 8. [3] 2 Cor. iv. 6.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 16. [5] Rom. viii. 37 ff.

'The only-begotten Son' has shown us what He is. We know God's glory in the glory of the Son, 'full of grace and truth.'[1] The love which finds its perfect expression in the Son's self-dedication to the Cross is at the same time the love of the Father who gave Him to us.[2] Because of the Son, we can be sure that 'God is love.'[3]

The writers of the New Testament Epistles were Jews who had already learnt to think of God as one and holy. In Christ they knew God to be a God of love and grace. Their faith in Christ was not an embarrassment to the stern monotheism of their Jewish heritage but its enrichment. It was through the Son that they knew the Father. Christ is the image, the portrait of the invisible God.[4] To see Him is to see the Father.[5] Later, the central message of Christianity that God is known in Christ was in part obscured. Thus in the Eastern Church many identified God with the absolute of pagan thought, and thought of Him as without attributes or feelings, not ineffable only, but unknown. In the Western Church, Roman ideas of law, and feudal conceptions of the rights and dignity of the overlord greatly influenced the Church's thought of God, and led to theories of Atonement which emphasized the love of Christ, but hid the love of God. In some Christian writings there have been given descriptions of God's arbitrary power as reckless as any in Islām. But in Christianity the historic life of Jesus has provided

[1] John i. 18, 14. [2] cp. 1 John iii. 16 and iv. 10.
[3] 1 John iv. 16. [4] Cor. i. 15. [5] John xiv. 9.

both a standard and an antidote. The great revivals of spiritual power in Christianity have arisen from the rediscovery of God in Christ. That is still the Church's problem. We have to rid ourselves of conceptions of God derived from alien sources, and explore for ourselves the revelation of God in the historic Christ. The Gospels speak to us of the holy love of Christ's life and death, and that holy love is the holy love of God. It is a revelation which belongs not to the past alone, but to the present; for the Christian finds operative in his life the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Christ.

The Christian conception of the Nature of the Divine is thus unique, and yet includes ideas which are found in each of the two great types of religion.

Like Zoroastrianism and early Islām, Christianity conceives of God as personal will. Such a conception can lead to submission rather than to faith, for this personal will may be regarded as unknown, or, if known, known only in so far as God has revealed His purposes through past prophets. But in Christianity God is not regarded as unknown or as known only in so far as He has given to men commands. He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, and in Him we may know the character of God.

The Christian conception of God has thus affinities also with the second great religious type. In this type the needs of religion are met by the belief in Manifestations of the Divine whose grace arouses men's gratitude and love. Yet there is a difference. Vishnu, with Krishna and

Rāma (his *avatārs*), and the Buddha of the 'full' Mahāyāna, are regarded as personal, and yet the ultimate Reality is held by Hinduism to be impersonal and attributeless, and by the Mahāyāna to be 'emptiness.' For Christianity, Christ is the true and perfect Manifestation of the Divine. The ultimate Reality is thus regarded not as an attributeless unknowable Being, nor as 'emptiness,' but as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God whose holy love is known in Him.

The legal and monotheistic type of religion gives meaning to man's moral task; it is less successful in redeeming men from the possession of the finite, and from life's pain and weariness. The second type is concerned with this redemption, but fails to relate man's moral task to the Reality to which he is redeemed. Thus in the Vedānta, moral activity has only a preliminary importance; redemption is sought by a realization of unity with Brahman for which good deeds as well as bad have lost their meaning. Christianity is a religion of redemption, conveying to men the possession of God's Spirit, the present experience of eternal life. But that redemption is ethical in its nature. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ and thus known to be one in character with Him. Redemption comes not through identity with an attributeless Absolute, but through communion with God. God is thus inevitably conceived in a threefold way. He is known as the Father in the Son, and through the Spirit. Thus we know Him, not through a past revelation only, but through a

present experience. And in this belief that God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who reveals Himself in the Son and through the Spirit, Christianity finds at once its Gospel and its task.

## III

# THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE

In Christianity the conception of the Nature of the Divine is intimately connected with the belief in God's self-manifestation in the historic life of Jesus Christ. Where Christ is vividly remembered, Christians feel no need for other Manifestations of the Divine. In their experience and their thought God and Christ are inseparably one.

In the non-Christian religions, the devout imagination has conceived in many ways of the Manifestations of the Divine. Where, as in Hinduism and in Buddhism, God has been regarded as unknowable, piety has turned from the thought of an ineffable absolute, or of 'emptiness,' to assert the existence of personal beings who, although of subordinate importance, can yet receive the devotion which it is impossible to give to a mere abstraction. Even where, as in Islām, God is conceived as living and personal, the devout have grown dissatisfied with the idea of a personal God who is remote from human needs, and we find a progressive idealization of Muhammad so that he is regarded, not as a prophet only, but as a Manifestation of the Divine, one able to intercede for men, and of more than human dignity. To these conceptions of the Manifestations of the Divine we have now to turn.

In Chinese Religion.

The Sacred Books of China speak little of Manifestations of the Divine. Heaven, whether called Shang-ti or Tien, was honoured as the supreme god, but his worship was the duty of the Emperor alone. Popular piety was more concerned with the cult of ancestors. Later, an increasing place was given to the cult of heroes. Thus Confucius, who had taught that, although the spirits should be honoured, men should hold aloof from them, was himself deified, and to him as early as 174 B.C. sacrifices were offered. Fifty years later a temple was erected in his honour, whilst in A.D. 555 an Imperial edict decreed that temples should be erected in his honour in all important towns.[1] But Confucius was only one of many heroes who received such recognition. Through the influence of Taoism and Buddhism, the Chinese pantheon became indescribably vast and various. Indigenous heroes and Buddhist gods and goddesses were alike worshipped. Life was conceived as a great battlefield between good and malignant spirits, and this led to a luxuriant idolatry by which the worshipper sought to secure the protection of a multiplicity of divine helpers.

For all the rich variety of its gods, Chinese civilization has been strangely secular. Around a gracious deity like Kuan-yin,[2] the Buddhist goddess of mercy, has gathered genuine devotion, but, in general, even the worship of the gods

[1] cp. Grube, *Religion und Kultur der Chinesen*, pp. 62 f.

[2] The Indo-Tibetan Avalokitesvara who, as Giles points out, was "represented down to the early part of the Twelfth Century as a man."—*Confucianism and its Rivals*, p. 175.

has tended to be utilitarian. Their worship, we are told by competent observers, is less a spontaneous expression of faith and love, than a means of securing their help in man's struggle against evil spirits. Thus even religion tends to be secular, for it is concerned more with man's safety and comfort than with the Divine or its Manifestations. More important than the worship of the gods is the cult of ancestors in which is expressed the filial piety of China—a cult which is inspired, not by gratitude only, but by fear.

### In Hinduism.

We have already described the quest for the One behind the many to which the *Upanishads* gave classic expression, and which reached its full development in Sankara's exposition of the Vedānta. The One was not unknowable only, but attributeless. It was free from the bondage of *karma*, because it was free from all desire. A being so abstract and meaningless could not meet the needs of religion, and the gods continued to be feared or loved as if no philosopher had taught their ultimate unreality. Side by side with the way of knowledge, to which Brahman alone was real, was the way of love (*bhakti*), in which redemption was sought by devotion to a god or gods.

Of the many books which express this way of love none to-day is so influential as the earliest of them all, the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The *Bhagavadgītā*, as its title denotes, claims to be the Song of the Blessed One, and to give

the actual words spoken by the Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the ancient battlefield of Kurukshetra. Krishna is here depicted as the supreme God, active and yet, because his activity is 'selfless,' free from the effect of deeds. On his selfless activity the world depends. He is self-sufficient, yet he works. In times of special need, he appears on earth to succour the right and to restrain the wrong. 'Whensoever the Law fails and lawlessness uprises,' 'then do I bring Myself to bodied birth. To guard the righteous, to destroy evil-doers, to establish the Law, I come into birth age after age.'[1] In him men may find their refuge and their peace. 'He who does My work, who is given over to Me, who is devoted to Me, void of attachment, without hatred to any born being,' 'comes to Me.'[2] Thus a man may do the duties of his caste, and yet be redeemed by Krishna's love. His grace is open to all without regard to sex or caste.[3] It matters not how trifling be the offerings men bring. Krishna will accept them. Even though they worship other gods he receives their offerings as if they had been made to him.[4] Thus all alike may receive the invitation which Krishna made to Arjuna. 'In Him seek refuge with thy whole soul'; by His grace thou shalt win supreme peace, the everlasting realm.' 'Have thy mind on Me, thy devotion toward Me, thy sacrifice to Me, do

[1] iv. 7 f. [2] xi. 55.

[3] We have here a difference between the way of knowledge and the way of love. The way of knowledge is open only to men of the three higher castes, for they alone may study the *Veda* in which is taught the truth that saves. (So Sankara *Vedāntasūtras* I. 3, 34.)

[4] ix. 26 and 23.

homage to Me. To Me shalt thou come. I make thee a truthful promise; thou art dear to Me. Surrendering all the Laws, come for refuge to Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sins; grieve not.'[1]

Such words are a witness to the spiritual genius of the author of the *Gītā*. Yet its contradictions are palpable. Krishna is not only identified with the Vishnu of the temple worship. He is identified also with the Attributeless All of the Vedānta. This God of love is elsewhere declared to be 'indifferent to all born beings,'and known to none.[2] The attributeless Absolute of the Vedānta is thus brought into connexion with the personal God of popular piety. But in what way the two can be identified is nowhere explained.

The teaching which the *Gītā* gives of the 'descents' or *avatārs* of Vishnu proved of decisive importance in later Vaishnavite devotion. Of these 'descents' ten receive special mention. They include his 'descent' as a fish, a tortoise and a boar, a man-lion and a dwarf. The historic Buddha was himself a 'descent' of Vishnu.[3] Most famous of all were Vishnu's 'descents' as Krishna and as Rāma.

It has been customary to translate the word *avatār* by 'incarnation.' If we do so, we have to remember that we are expressing a Hindu conception by a Christian word. In Christianity, Christ is regarded as the full revelation of God, and so no repetition of the Incarnation is expected.

[1] xviii. 62, 63 ff.
[2] ix. 29 and vii. 26. cp. earlier p.
[3] We have here an interesting attempt to overcome Buddhism by incorporating the Buddha into the Hindu pantheon.

In Vaishnavism, the 'descents' of Vishnu are many and diverse, and even of the same 'descent' the legends differ much.

### The Krishna-cult.

Modern Hindus often speak as if the dependence of Christianity on one historic figure of the past was a proof of its narrowness and weakness. The history of the Krishna-cult is the best answer to this criticism. The Krishna of the *Gītā* is not a historic figure, but the product of an imagination both pure and elevated. But imagination, if unchecked by historic fact, can be lewd and foolish. The Krishna of the *Gītā* faded from men's memories.[1] Instead of the dignified god of the *Gītā*, Krishna became the wanton shepherd-god of the late *Purānas*, mischievous, and lustful as no man has strength to be. Through the influence of Christianity, the Krishna of the *Gītā* has been rediscovered in recent years, and the Puranic stories are to-day explained away. Thus Krishna's dalliance with the shepherd-girls is interpreted as an allegory of divine humility and condescension. But it would be better if these Puranic stories could be forgotten. It is still part of the tragedy of India's life that the noble Krishna of the *Gītā* of whom many college students proudly speak is associated in their minds with the foul Krishna

[1] Thus for Hinduism at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, we have two competent sources; the writings of Rām Mohan Rai for North India, and Abbé Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* for South India. We find in them many references to Krishna. I can find in them none to the Krishna of the *Gītā*.

of the *Purānas*, whose lustful exploits are taught to children as 'religious' stories, and depicted in the frescoes and the statuary of some of the great temples.

*Bhakti*, 'love,' as enjoined in the *Gītā*, has the sobriety which we associate with faith. In many later phases of the Krishna cult, *bhakti*, love, expresses the heat of human passion uncontrolled. In Hindu dramas the chastity of the wife is usually assumed, and in no literature is her fidelity more strictly enjoined. Yet in many forms of the Krishna-cult the worshipper thinks of himself, not as Krishna's lawful wife, but as Rādhā, his passionate paramour. But it has to be remembered that in India marriages are generally arranged by parents. It may well be that it is this which explains why the fervid love of Krishna found its fit symbol, not in the ordered love of unromantic married life, but in the devotion of one who, in her passion, risked her all.[1]

Yet to Krishna, too, has been given a worship free from sensual passion. Thus in Western India there is the rich devotion of the Marāthā saints, whose hymns express a love as pure as it is fervid.[2] This devotion we may illustrate from the hymns of Tukārām, which to-day are sung not only by the common people, but also by the

[1] cf. M. T. Kennedy, *The Chaitanya Movement*, p. 109.

[2] Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out that in the Krishna-cult which gathers around the shrine of Vithobā, Krishna is regarded, not as the lover of Rādhā, his mistress, but as the husband of Rukminī, his lawful wife, and in this way "the Vaishnavism of the Marāthā country is more sober and purer." (*Vaishnavism, Saivism*, etc., p. 89). For Tukārām see J. N. Fraser and J. F. Edwards, *The Life and Teaching of Tukārām*.

highly educated members of the Prārthanā Samāj, who seek to discover in them a pure monotheism. And the greatest of Indian Christian poets, N. V. Tilak, tells us that 'it was over the bridge of Tukārām's verse' that he 'came to Christ.'

As we have seen, according to the teaching of the Vedānta the unknowable Brahman alone is real; a god, if personal and active, must belong to the unreal world of *karma* and of *māyā*. But in his prayers to Krishna, Tukāram speaks as if the God he worshipped was both personal and real. By love (*bhakti*) may he be known.

'Thy nature is beyond the grasp
Of human speech or thought.
So love I've made the measure-rod,
By which I can be taught.

Thus with the measure-rod of love
I mete the Infinite.
In sooth, to measure him there is
None other means so fit.'[1]

At times he complains that he is forsaken, and speaks of the tears with which he waits for Krishna's reappearing. Yet even in his sorrow, Krishna has all his love. His poems reveal one to whom God was the supreme concern of life. The idol at Vithobā, around which his devotion gathered, looks ugly and uninspiring. Yet in the Krishna there depicted he found a god of whom he thought with tender reverence and trust.

[1] *Psalms of Marāthā Saints*, by N. Macnicol. xlvi. p. 73. Tukārām's date is given as 1608-49 A.D.

THE RĀMA-CULT.

Of great influence also have been the myths connected with Rāma, who rivals Krishna in importance as an *avatār* or 'descent' of Vishnu.

In the early form of the *Rāmāyana*, Rāma is depicted as an earthly hero. In later forms he becomes a god able to succour his worshippers. Most famous of all the later vernacular versions is the Hindī *Rāmāyana* of Tulsī Dās.[1] The book describes the familiar story of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā, of Rāma's exile, and his return at length to rule over his kingdom in perfect happiness. But the story is no longer that of a mere earthly king. Rāma is a partial 'incarnation' of the Lord.[2] The name of Rāma has saving power for Rāma is now a god demanding and accepting faith. 'Anyone who reads or hears or recites this story' of Rāma 'washes out the stains of the world, and the stains of his own soul, and without any trouble goes straight to Rāma's sphere in heaven.' There follows the poet's own confession of adoration. 'Rāma alone is beautiful, all wise, full of compassion, and of loving-kindness for the destitute, disinterested in his benevolence, and the bestower of final deliverance; whom else can I desire. There is no other Lord but Rāma, by whose favour, however slight, even I, the dull-witted Tulsī Dās, have found perfect peace.'[3]

[1] His date is given as from A.D. 1532-1623.

[2] Hari (=Vishnu) having pity on the misery of the world, resolved that four brothers should be born as partial *avatārs* of him. The king received a god-given oblation. To one wife, he gave half, and thus Rāma was born; to another wife a quarter, and Bharata was born; to another wife two portions of one eighth each, and Satrughna and Lakshmana were born.

[3] vii. *Chhand* 12. (Growse's translation).

THE WORSHIP OF SIVA.

Krishna is depicted as a genial, if at times a lustful god; Rāma is a god both gracious and noble. And both these gods are believed to have lived on earth as *avatārs* of Vishnu. But the devotion to Siva is harder still to understand. The phrase of Luther's 'The two belong together, faith and God' seems here to be inapplicable. Siva is depicted as terrifying, and at times grotesque, and yet the devotion offered to him is fervid and sincere.

Doubtless the conception of Siva is syncretic. He is the Rudra of the *Rigveda*, the god of destruction whose 'bright arrow' men fear, although to appease him they call him auspicious (*siva*). He is the god of the Himalayas, the ascetic who because of his austerities is of incomparable power. He is the lord of goblins, dancing wildly in the graveyards, his body smeared with ashes, his neck adorned with dead men's bones. God of destruction though he is, he is connected with the mystery of birth and has for his common emblem a phallic stone. Yet, in South India especially, he is regarded also as a friendly god whose 'sports' men love to praise. In strange disguises he appears to his saints genially deceiving them, and even the weirdest stories of him arouse men's love and wonder. Strange as seem the stories of this god, his worship has inspired not only a rich literature of devotion, but the philosophy of the *Saiva Siddhānta*, which, seeing in Siva the supreme god, reaches more nearly than any other Hindu system to a true monotheism.

Siva is represented as manifesting himself to men, not in *avatārs*, but by temporary theophanies. As a modern exponent of the Saiva Siddhānta remarks, 'That Siva had no *avatārs* or births is generally known. This is the greatest distinction of the ancient Hindu philosophy and of the Saiva school, making it a purely transcendental religion, freed of all anthropomorphic conceptions. . . . But this absolute nature of Siva does not prevent him from his being personal at the same time, and appearing as Guru and Saviour, in the form of man, out of his great love and feeling for the sin and sorrow of mankind, and helping them to get rid of their bondage.'[1]

Of this love to Siva there is no nobler exponent than Mānikka Vāsagar,[2] whose Holy Word (*Tiruvāsagam*) still provides the Tamil-speaking Saivites of South India with songs of worship.

The poems narrate the story of a great conversion. Mānikka Vāsagar had been chief minister of the Pāndyan king, but at his conversion, abandoning his wealth and office, he wandered in poverty from temple to temple extolling Siva's grace. Often in his poems he refers to Siva's mercy in making him his own.

'To "birth" and "death" that cling to man, I
gave no thought;
And uttering merest lies went on my way.
By eyes of maids with flowing jet-black locks
Disturbed with passion filled, I helpless lay.

[1] Nallasvāmī Pillai *Studies in Saiva Siddhānta* p. 299.

[2] His date is quite uncertain. Dr. G. N. Pope in the introduction to his great edition of the Tamil text supposes "that he lived somewhere about the seventh or eighth century of our era." There is a brief account of him in *R. H. C.*, pp. 124-40

He came! the anklets on His roseate feet—
I heard their tinkling sound; nor parts the bliss!
In grace my precious Helper made me His:
This miracle of love I know not, I.'[1]

In the interests of peace, Hinduism has sought to reconcile the claims of the sectarian gods by asserting that Brahmā was the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer. Mānikka Vāsagar, instead, claims that all these three functions belong to Siva.

'All worlds
Thou didst create, protect, destroy, enrich with grace.'[2]

'He is the Ancient One, Who creates the Creator of all;
He is the God, Who preserves the Preserver of things created;
He is the God, Who destroys the Destroyer.'[3]

At times, Mānikka Vāsagar speaks as if already he was redeemed and could wait in happy confidence the time when Siva would take him to himself. At other times he complains that Siva has abandoned him and left him 'in this poor world to pine away.'[4] In his distress he threatens to hold Siva up to mockery.

'"Madman, clad in wild elephant's skin"; "Madman, with hide for his garb";
"Madman that ate the poison"; "Madman of the burning-ground-fire";
"Madman that chose even me for His own!"'

Yet this poem, too, ends on the note of love.

[1] XLI. iv. [2] i. 41 f. [3] iii. 13 f. [4] v. xlviii.

'Abusing Thee or praising—crushed by sin, and grieved am I!
Lo! Thou'st forsaken me, Thou brightness on red coral hill!
Thou mad'st me Thine; didst fiery poison eat, pitying poor souls,
That I might Thine ambrosia taste—I, meanest one!'[1]

As we read these ancient poems, we can understand the Tamil saying, 'He whose heart is not melted by the *Tiruvāsagam* must have a stone for a heart.' But his devotion is more attractive than the legends of the god he praised. He speaks of Siva's love, but that love had in it much caprice.

### Goddess-worship.

This sense of the caprice of the Divine finds pointed expression in the Goddess-worship which, in Bengal especially, forms a large part of popular religion. Nature seems sometimes kind, and sometimes cruel, and in the hymns which celebrate the Mother-goddess, Siva's consort,[2] we can see the projection of this experience. As we remember the way the goddess Kālī is presented in pictures and statuary, it is not easy to understand the devotion she evokes. Dancing on her prostrate Lord, garlanded with shells, with ten arms, fierce and with projecting tongue—such

[1] vi. ii. xlix. l. The last lines refer to the legend that Siva at the request of the lesser gods came down to save the world and churned the sea of milk. First there came forth a stream of dark and deadly poison. This Siva drank up that there might issue forth the ambrosia of undying gladness. Hence his throat is dark and swollen—a memento of his grace.

[2] Known as Durgā or Kālī.

is the Kālī in whom many see a Manifestation of the Divine. Yet the worship of this cruel, fickle Mother has not lacked poet-saints. We may take as illustration Rāmprasād Sen, an eighteenth century poet of Bengal, whose songs are still popular in the villages of Bengal.[1]

At times the poet speaks of Kālī as his only refuge. 'The name of Durgā is my promised Land of Salvation, fields flowing with nectar. Tell thy tongue everywhere to utter her name.'[2] Yet his poems speak less of the divine Mother's love than of her cruelty. 'Is motherhood then a mere word of the lips? Bringing forth does not make a mother, unless she can understand the griefs of her child.'[3] 'No longer shall I call you Mother: countless ills have you sent me, Mother, countless ills are sending. I had home and dear ones, but you made me a mendicant. What worse can you do, O Long-Tressed Goddess. . . . Is this a mother's way—being the mother, to be her child's foe?'[4]

Brief as has been our summary, it is sufficient to show the amazing diversity of the Hindu conceptions of the Manifestation of the Divine. The dominant philosophy has taught that the sole reality is the attributeless Brahman who is beyond men's worship. Yet the devout have

[1] A selection of them has been translated by E. J. Thompson and A. M. Spencer, under the title *Bengali Religious Lyrics Sākta*, from which our translations are taken.

[2] *op. cit.* xlvii. The *Durgā-pūjā* is the most popular festival in Bengal. To her as Kālī human sacrifices were offered until prevented by the British Government. The writer saw in 1909 in a Hindu shop a picture of Kālī cutting off the heads of Europeans.

[3] *op. cit.* ii.

[4] *op. cit.* viii.

prayed to their gods as if they were real, and because the supreme God has been regarded as beyond men's knowledge, the conceptions of the Manifestation of the Divine have varied with men's aspirations. As a modern Hindu writer remarks, 'The Hindu is fundamentally an agnostic . . . and therefore has ever felt at liberty to imagine and invent whatsoever God or Gods he chooses to adore. He has not feared to conceive the Divinity as He, She, It or They. He has worshipped his Deity as father, mother, brother, sister, sweetheart, lover, friend, and what not. His polytheism or henotheism is based essentially on his agnosticism. . . . And the invention of deities has not yet ceased.'[1]

### In Buddhism.

It seems at first sight a paradox to speak of the Manifestation of the Divine in Buddhism. Early Buddhism ignored or rejected the idea of God; how then could it believe in Manifestations of the Divine? But such a statement of the facts is misleading. As we have seen, although early Buddhism rejected the idea of a supreme God, it yet, in its teaching on the Three Refuges and on *Nirvāna*, recognized the existence of supramundane realities, marked off from ordinary life as the Holy is from the profane, whilst in its formulation of the doctrine of *karma* it gave to the principle of retribution a place comparable to that of a living God.[2]

Of Gautama's own estimate of himself it is

[1] Mr. Benoy Kumar Sarkar *The Folk-element in Hindu Culture*, p. 260.

[2] See earlier p.

impossible to speak with any certainty. The Buddhist texts require a far more critical examination than they have yet received, and it is at present difficult to decide with any confidence what are its oldest and most authentic fragments. Doubtless, in general, the Pāli literature represents an older tradition than the Sanskrit literature of the Mahāyāna. But the Pāli literature itself represents various schools of Buddhist thought, and, even in it, there is already a luxuriant growth of myth and legend.

No words of Gautama's are more often quoted by Western writers than those words which are assigned to the last days of his long life. Ānanda, his best-loved disciple, had asked him to bequeath to his followers instructions which should guide them when he had gone. This Gautama declined to do. 'Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves.' And later the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda, and said: 'It may be, Ānanda, that in some of you the thought may arise, "The word of the Master is ended, we have no teacher more!" But it is not thus, Ānanda, that you should regard it. The truths and the rules of the order which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you.' And his last recorded words are these, 'Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, "Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with dili-

gence." '[1] Words such as these are often quoted to show that Gautama claimed only to be a great teacher. He was content to be forgotten, if only his teaching was understood and obeyed.

Such an interpretation seems to belong more to the Europe of the nineteenth century than to Gautama's age and land. He claimed for his words an entire obedience and forbade his followers to speculate where he had refused to do so. Even in the *Sutta* from which we have been quoting, he is reported to have said that 'when a *Bodhisatta*[2] consciously and deliberately leaves his temporary form in the heaven of delight and descends into his mother's womb, then is the earth made to quake and tremble and is shaken violently.' Earthquakes mark also his birth, his enlightenment and 'that utter passing away in which nothing whatever is left behind.'[3] When Gautama's death drew near, trees blossomed out of season that their blooms might cover his body, whilst heavenly flowers and sandalwood powder fell from the sky to do him honour. Before his death, he bade Ānanda treat his remains as they 'treat the remains of a king of kings.'[4]

The Pāli texts then do not speak merely of a human teacher. To what extent they reflect Gautama's own estimate of himself it seems impossible to decide with confidence. He claimed from his followers an unquestioning obedience,

[1] *The Book of the Great Decease* (*Buddhist Suttas, S.B.E.* xi.) ii. 33, vi. 1 and 10.

[2] *Bodhisatta* (in Sanskrit, *Bodhisattva*) means 'One whose essence is enlightenment,' i.e., one destined to become a Buddha.

[3] *op. cit.* v. 4 f. [4] *op. cit.* v. 26.

and received from them reverence. How he thought of himself we cannot tell.[1]

So long as the Pāli texts were held to teach a rationalism connected with one who was regarded as a merely human teacher, the grandiose place assigned to the Buddha in the 'full' Mahāyāna seemed simply unintelligible. But it is now clear that there was no violent break. Thus the so-called Third Council held at Patna in 256 B.C. had to condemn the views of those who held that Sākyamuni had never actually lived in the world of men. He dwelt in the Tusita heaven; what gods and men saw on earth was only his phantom.[2] Although such extravagances were condemned as heresy, even the orthodox book, *The Questions of King Milanda*, describes Buddha not only as a god (*deva*), but as 'the god of gods' (*devati deva*), whilst the *Birth Stories* narrate the tales of his earlier lives on earth as a *Bodhisattva*. By the beginning of the Christian era, images of Buddha came into common use. To-day even in countries like Ceylon and Burma, where Buddhism is of the Hīnayāna type and claims to be based on the Pāli Scriptures, there may be seen the worship of images of Buddha which in their placid beauty are strangely attractive to those familiar with the grotesque statues of Hindu temples.

[1] Prof. A. B. Keith remarks: 'The Buddha treats Brahmā, regarded as the highest of the gods, and all the hosts of heaven, with a cool superciliousness which is explicable more easily on the ground of his conscious divinity than as an outcome of a rationalism, which certainly his disciples did not understand.' So he holds that 'every ground of probability supports the plain evidence of the texts that he himself had claims which necessarily conferred upon him a place as high as the rank of the greatest of gods.'—*Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 29.

[2] cp. Poussin *Bouddhisme*, p. 259.

The growing exaltation of Buddha reaches its completion in the 'full' Mahāyāna, reflected in the *Lotus of the True Law*.[1] In this book, Sākyamuni is as much a god to his worshippers as is the Krishna of the *Bhagavadgītā*. He reached enlightenment, not first in Gautama's life on earth, but 'hundred thousands of myriads of *kotis* of aeons' ago. It was only in appearance that he seemed to become extinct. 'The duration' of his life is actually 'as long as an endless period.' He is 'the father of the world, the Self-born, the Healer, the Protector of all creatures.' He teaches 'final rest,' himself 'not being at rest.'[2]

With Sākyamuni are associated many other divine beings. Especially is there praised the grace of the *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara, who, changing his sex, has become the much-worshipped Goddess of Mercy.[3] Yet exalted as is Sākyamuni, he is only a Manifestation of the Divine. The philosophy dominant in this school taught that the ultimate reality is 'emptiness,' and, although Sākyamuni is for all the purposes of religion the Supreme God, yet he is so described as to leave room for 'an orthodox, i.e. Atheist interpretation.'[4]

In the simpler form of the Mahāyāna, that given in the 'Paradise' Scriptures, Amitābha is not so much a Manifestation of the Divine as God Himself. This school is little troubled by philosophy, and bids the devout pray to

[1] The *Saddharma Pundarīka*. See earlier p. 51 f.
[2] *op. cit.* xv.
[3] Kwan-yin in China, Kwannon, in Japan.
[4] cp. Poussin, *E. R. E.* viii. p. 145.

Amitābha as God, and look forward at death, not to extinction, but to a life of bliss with this mythic Lord of the Western Paradise. It is this form of Buddhism which later had much influence in the Far East. In Japan to-day the Pure Land and the True Pure Land Sects represent Buddhism in its most active forms, and show a remarkable power of imitating and adapting Christian forms of thought and methods of propaganda.

### In Zoroastrianism.

In Hinduism and in most phases of Buddhism the supreme God, as we have seen, was held to be unknown. In consequence, popular piety was directed to personal but inferior gods, who were regarded as Manifestations of the Divine. In Zoroastrianism and Islām in their first forms, God was conceived as personal and active. The founders of these religions claimed to know the will of God for men, and in their living faith in a supreme God they felt no need for Manifestations of the Divine. Yet in both these religions there arose the belief that the Divine has been manifested, and later piety gave to their founders a more than human place.

In the *Gāthās*, Zoroaster is depicted as the prophet of Ahura Mazdāh, the supreme God, and as such he summoned men to obey the Truth and to shun the Lie. He spoke of himself as the 'friend' and 'praiser' of Mazdāh,[1] and claimed to be a 'deliverer' (*Saoshyant*) in the sense that he and those who obeyed his teaching

[1] See earlier p. 53.

were hasteners of that time when God's will would triumph and His Kingdom come.[1] He appears to speak of himself as 'judge,'[2] whilst he promised his followers that he would accompany over 'the Bridge of the Separator,' those whom he impelled to the adoration of Mazdāh Ahura.[3] But Zoroaster seems to have expected that God's work would be accomplished in his own lifetime. He himself was the leader of the faithful. In no sense did he claim to be a Manifestation of the Divine.

Later, although Zoroaster's teaching was largely forgotten, he himself was given a superhuman place. Even in so early a document as the prose *Gāthā of the Seven Chapters* we read 'Mazdāh and Zarathushtra do we adore.'[4] In the later *Avestā*, Zoroaster becomes a legendary hero. Thus at his birth 'the wicked, evil-doing Daevas'[5] 'rush away' into 'the depths of the dark, horrid world of hell' wondering how they can procure the death of Zoroaster, 'the stroke that fells the fiend, the counter-fiend to the fiends.'[6] In his conflict with Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit, Zoroaster hurls at his enemy stones 'big as a house,' and conquers him by potent spells.[7] The later Pahlavi books invest the life of Zoroaster with still more strange marvels. As a modern Pārsī scholar puts it, 'Zoroaster is an historical personage in the *Gāthās*. In the later *Avestā*

[1] cp. *Ys.* xlvi. 3 and xxx. 9. [2] *Ys.* xxxiii. 1.
[3] *Ys.* xlvi. 10. On the Bridge of the Separator, see later p. 133 f,
[4] *Ys.* xlii. 21. Moulton suggests that the mention of Zoroaster here may be a gloss, as he is nowhere else referred to in this writing *The Treasure of the Magi* p. 12.
[5] *Devils.* In Hinduism, *devas* are the gods.
[6] *Vdd* xix. 46 f. [7] *Yt.* xvii. 20.

he is surrounded by an aureole, and becomes superhuman; but in the Pahlavi works his personality is enshrouded by miracles, and he is transformed into a myth.'[1]

The prominence of fire in Pārsī worship explains the popular belief that the Pārsīs are 'fire-worshippers.' That is a misunderstanding. As we have seen, later Zoroastrianism associated with Ahura Mazdāh archangels and angels to whom sacrifices were offered. It is in this connexion that the sacred fire is used in Pārsī worship. The fire is the symbol of the Angel of Fire (Atar), and none but the most ignorant pray to the fire as if it were in itself a Manifestation of the Divine.

The rediscovery of the *Gāthās* has led to the attempt to turn from the conception of Zoroaster as a demigod or legendary hero to the conception of him in these ancient works as a prophet of righteousness. But reformers complain that it is easier to remove later accretions than it is to revive Zoroaster's living faith in God, and that the attempt to present Zoroaster as a great prophet only has led, not to the recovery of his zeal for God, but to a vague Deism to which religion is little more than pride of race.

### In Islām.

In the *Qurān*, Muhammad is depicted as a powerful and authoritative prophet; he is not in any sense a Manifestation of the Divine. Other races had had prophets, but not the Arab people. Now to the Arabs God had sent a prophet

[1] M. N. Dhalla *Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 195.

whom they must obey if they would earn heaven and escape hell. Later, Muhammad believed that his work was of still wider importance. He had been sent 'to mankind at large to announce and to threaten.'[1] The success which came to Muhammad at Medina brought to him an added sense of God's favour, and he claimed for himself, not only entire obedience, but privileges denied to other Muslims. Thus his followers could have only four wives.[2] The Prophet might have 'any believing woman who hath given herself up to him, if he desired to wed her—a Privilege' for him 'above the rest of the faithful.'[3] The *Qurān* assigns to Jesus, not only some of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, but also many of the crude marvels mentioned in the Apocryphal Gospels. Of Muhammad no miracles are recorded. Jesus is accused of no sin, but Muhammad has to pray for forgiveness. He is bidden 'to seek pardon' for his 'fault,'[4] and, in one of the early *Sūrahs*, is reproved for showing rudeness to a blind man who was poor.[5] Muhammad claimed for himself the authority of God's last and greatest prophet; he did not make for himself any further claim.

The sayings of the *Qurān* proved inadequate to meet the complex needs of later Islām, and Traditions (*Hadīth*) were compiled which professed to be a record of the Prophet's acts and

[1] *S.* xxxiv. 27.
[2] *S.* iv. 3.
[3] *S.* xxxiii. 49.
[4] *S.* xl. 57.
[5] *S.* lxxx. 1-10. According to tradition, Muhammad was speaking, at the time when the blind man approached him, to a wealthy and influential man.

words. When the victories of Islām brought its followers into close association with Christian peoples, there were naturally introduced into these Traditions incidents which seemed to make Muhammad a worthy rival to the Christians' Lord, and his life story was now embellished with strange marvels. Portents in heaven and earth marked the night of his conception; the thrones of earthly kings were upturned; wild animals in the East hastened to tell the good news of his coming to wild animals in the West. In the sixth month of her pregnancy his mother heard a voice from heaven telling her that she was pregnant with the best of all the world, and bidding her name him at his birth Muhammad. A light shone forth from her womb due to Muhammad's presence in it. When the time came for his birth, she had no human helpers and needed none, for four archangels were there to receive the child in a golden net, and to lay it in a coverlet of finest Benares cloth. He was born already circumcised, and his birth was free from all impurity.[1] Miracles like those of Jesus were assigned to Muhammad. He, too, had multiplied loaves, and fed the hungry, whilst from a single drop of water he had provided water enough for a vast crowd to drink.[2]

[1] For these legends see Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde*, pp. 26-91. Some of these legends seem to be derived from late Zoroastrian and Buddhist myths.

[2] Andrae *op. cit.* pp. 46 f. or Guillaume. *The Traditions of Islām* pp. 136 f. Zwemer (*The Moslem Christ*, 1912 edition, p. 164) speaks of a modern Indian Muslim work entitled *Two Hundred and Fifty-two Authentic Miracles of Mohammed*, published by the Mohammedan Tract and Book Depot, Lahore, 1894. For full illustrations of this, see Andrae *op. cit.* pp. 124-390

Nor was Islām content to assign to Muhammad the working of miracles. The infallibility of his character was strongly asserted, and he had an increasing place in the devotion of the Faithful. The supreme sign of love to God was love to Muhammad, and his character came to be regarded as the pattern of moral excellence.

As was natural, it was from the Sūfīs, the mystics of Islām, that there came the fullest development of the doctrine of Muhammad's person. For many of them Muhammad was not so much the prophet of a personal God as the Manifestation of that Divine Essence which is the sole Reality. Not only was Muhammad for them the greatest of the saints. He was the perfect Man and as such the copy of God.[1] His 'archetypal Spirit' was 'the medium through which God became conscious of Himself in creation.'[2] From the 'Light of Muhammad' was created the whole world: from the heart of Muhammad was created 'Isrāfīl, the mightiest of the angels and the nearest to God.'[3] Muhammad was thus regarded as the first created of God, and the archetype of all other created beings. As Dr. Nicholson remarks, we have here 'an Islāmic Logos doctrine. It brings Muhammad in some respects very near to the Christ of the Fourth Gospel and the Pauline Epistles.' Yet, as he points out, 'if the resemblance is great, so is the difference. The Fatherhood of God, the Incarnation and the Atonement suggest an

[1] cp. the quotation from Jīlī given in R. A. Nicholson's *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 103 ff.

[2] *op. cit.* p. 110.

[3] *op cit.* p. 115.

infinitely rich and sympathetic personality, whereas the Mohammedan Logos tends to identify itself with the active principle of revelation in Divine essence. Mohammed is loved and adored as the perfect image or copy of God : " he that has seen me has seen Allah," says the tradition. Except that he is not quite co-equal and co-eternal with his Maker, there can be no limit to glorification of the Perfect Man.' Dr. Nicholson adds, ' I need hardly say that Mohammed gave the lie direct to those who would have thrust this sort of greatness upon him : his apotheosis is the triumph of religious feeling over historical fact.'[1]

By modern Muslims it is realized that the issue between Islām and Christianity is ultimately a choice between Muhammad and Christ. Muhammad has a great place in the hearts of many of his followers, and books of devotion narrate his glorious names, and some of these names give to him a superhuman dignity.[2] Growing knowledge of the character of Jesus leads many so to depart from the witness of the *Qurān* as to ascribe sinlessness to Muhammad, whilst some venture even to assert the sinfulness of Jesus. Such controversialists are not ready to accept the most favourable estimate of impartial scholars: that Muhammad was a wise and humane Arab chieftain whose excesses can be explained by the standards of his age and place. Instead, he is extolled as the one perfect exemplar to man-

[1] *op. cit.* pp. 87 f.

[2] The Two Hundred and One Names are conveniently given in Zwemer, *op. cit.* pp. 157-60.

kind, and it is alleged that it is only Christian prejudice that can discover in him any fault. Thus the man who, as Goldziher well remarks, 'did not feel himself to be a saint, and did not wish to be thus regarded,[1] is depicted as the one perfect saint the world has known. In the faith of many of his followers he has a place which, if not quite divine, is yet greater than can be given to one regarded only as a man.[2]

### In Christianity.

The place of Christ in Christianity seems to be without parallel in the Living Religions of the East. As we have seen, in the earliest documents Zoroaster and Muhammad are in no sense regarded as Manifestations of the Divine. They are prophets whose authority is dependent on the truth of the message they proclaim. Gautama, the Buddha, ignored or rejected the idea of a supreme God, and taught a way of deliverance in which God had no place. The later piety of their followers gave to all these historic founders a superhuman dignity, but the founder and the God he preached were not identified in character. The 'full' Mahāyāna, which spoke of Buddha as a divine being, did not see in him the image of a supreme and personal God; the ultimate reality was 'emptiness.' Where Buddhism has approached to a true theism, the personal and supreme God has been held to be Amitābha (Amida), the mythic

[1] Goldziher *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, p. 21.

[2] See next chapter pp. 133 f. for the place assigned by later piety to Muhammad as the intercessor for his people.

Lord of the Western Paradise, for whom no claim is made that he has been revealed in a historic person. In Islām, the apotheosis of Muhammad as the Perfect Man, the copy of God, arose among the Sūfis, and the God whom he is said to reveal is not the personal God of the *Qurān*, but the Divine Essence who is essentially unknowable.[1]

The apotheosis of Buddha and Muhammad is thus comparable, not to the place of Christ in Christianity, but to the place assigned to the gods in the Hindu Way of Love (*bhakti-mārga*). Vaishnavism, as we have seen, speaks of the 'descents' the '*avatārs*' of Vishnu; Saivism, of Siva's temporary theophanies. Neither phases of Hinduism conceives of God as once incarnate in such a way that His character is known in the historic mediator. The manifestations of Siva are his 'sports,' and these differ much in character. Vishnu had many *avatārs*, some animal, some human, and even of the same *avatār* there are very varied stories. Even the two most celebrated *avatārs*, Krishna and Rāma are legendary figures. Imagination, unchecked by fact, may be degraded as well as pure, and the Krishna whom the *Gītā* nobly depicts is also the lewd Krishna of the late *Purānas*. Even of the exalted Rāma of Tulsī Dās's *Rāmāyana* we read. 'Rāma is infinite, his perfections infinite, and his *legends* of immeasurable expansion; men of enlightened understanding will therefore wonder at nothing they hear,'[2] and we have the warning that the gods must not be imitated by men. 'The fool who in

[1] See earlier pp. 99 f. [2] *Dohā*, 42.

the pride of knowledge presumes to copy the gods, saying it is the same for a man as for a god shall be cast into hell for as long as this world lasts.'[1]

Here too we are confronted with two clearly marked religious types. In early Zoroastrianism and Islām, God is conceived as personal; His will has been made known through His prophet, but that prophet is not regarded as a revelation of God. In various aspects of the Hindu Way of Love, in the 'full' Mahāyāna Buddhism, in some places of Sūfism, we have the idea of the Manifestation of the Divine, but the Divine thus manifested is not regarded as a God, at once, personal and supreme.

In this connexion also, Christianity has affinities with each of these great types of religion, and yet differs from them both. It speaks of a God personal and supreme, who has revealed His will to men, and it declares that this revelation has come, not through the teaching of a prophet only, but in One in whose holy love can be seen the holy love of God.

It is in this that we have the uniqueness of the Christian claim. Vaishnavism, and some later developments of Buddhism and Islām, approximate to the doctrine of Incarnation. But nowhere else is the character of the founder of the religion normative for the conception of God, of the Moral Ideal, and of the Meaning and the Permanence of Life.

It is this which gives to the first three Gospels an importance in Christianity greater than that which any Scriptures have in other religions. In the Man whom they portray is shown the Nature

[1] *Dohā*, 79.

of the God He preached. And those Gospels have naturally been studied as no other books. Many problems of their criticism are still unsolved, and many details in the life-story of Jesus remain obscure. He was a Jew speaking to men of His own age and land, and much that He said is hard to understand, whilst the reports of His words may be in part coloured by the beliefs and prejudices of the evangelists. Yet the Gospels contain sayings and parables which, by their inimitable power, witness to their authenticity. We cannot explain the development of His mission as if we knew the inmost secret of His life. It was not Himself he preached, so much as God and God's Kingdom. Yet He so preached God and God's purposes as to show that He Himself belonged to that message He proclaimed. This or that question may perplex the scholar, and yet it is the prime fact of Christian experience that in His life of holy obedience and loving service, we have not only the highest that we know or can conceive of ; we have revealed the very character of God. He speaks to us, not as a dead teacher of the past, but as a present Saviour. He brings to men to-day as He brought to men of His own age, peace for their souls. He makes from men the hardest demands, and yet believers in Him find His message a Gospel, His yoke easy and His burden light. For all the perplexities of criticism, many have found in Him a present reality. In seeing Him, they have known that they are seeing God ; that, as He was, so God is.

This common Christian experience finds in the other books of the New Testament its first and

classic expression. Their writers differed much in temperament and outlook ; yet all alike have discovered God in Christ, though some have succeeded better than others in entering into the full meaning of that discovery. From the very beginning of Christianity, Jesus was preached not only as the Messiah and the living Lord, but as the One in whom God had revealed His saving will to men. We have the clearest instance of this discovery of God in Christ in the writings of St. Paul. Often his words have been used in the support of later theories of Christ's work which obscure the revelation of God's holy love in Him. Such use of Paul's words is due to a misunderstanding of them.[1] Nor do we rightly interpret St. Paul's relationship to Christ if we speak with some modern scholars of his Christ-cult.'[2] A 'Christ-cult' implies that St. Paul thought of Christ as pagans of the first Christian centuries thought of their 'redeemer-god,' or as Vaishnavites in India have thought of the special god of their devotion. In such cults, the god is not related to the supreme God. He is loved by those who trust in him ; he is not regarded as the decisive revelation of the character of God. For Paul as a Christian, as for Paul as a Jew, God was neither an ineffable essence nor an attributeless substrate of being ; He was a personal and living God. As we have seen, his conception of God's character was transformed by his faith in Christ. Before, God had seemed to him a God who needed

[1] For proof of this necessarily too brief and dogmatic statement, the writer would venture to refer to his recent book *The Gospel of St. Paul,* pp. 86-109.

[2] cf. *op. cit.* pp. 70 f., 266-72.

to be reconciled ; a God whose relationship to men was fully expressed by the ideas of 'law' and retribution. Now he knew God as One who loved men even in their sin, who had reconciled the world to Himself in Christ. God's glory had thus gained for St. Paul a new meaning for that glory had become visible in the face of Jesus Christ—a glory not of retributive justice but of holy love.[1] In the heat of controversy, he might fall back for a moment to his pre-Christian view of God, yet always he returns to his discovery of God in Christ. In his experience God and Christ were one. His work for God was work for Christ. In no sense was Christ to him 'another God.' He retained the strict monotheism of his Jewish faith, and yet gave to Christ a place no mere man has a right to fill ; and he did so without any sense of divided loyalty. In knowing Christ, he knew God, and not God alone, but the ideal of duty. Christ's love had constraining power. It could inspire men to show something of the love of Christ's own life and death. We have the same discovery in the Fourth Gospel. He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father. To know the Son is to know the Father, and this is eternal life.[2]

This central truth of Christianity has often been obscured. The writers of the New Testament were Jews, accustomed already to think of God as holy and personal. It was the fullness of His love that they found in the life and death of Christ. As we have seen,[3] when Christianity went out into the pagan world and won there its

[1] cp. Rom. v. 8., 2 Cor. v. 19, and iv. 6.
[2] John xiv. 9., xvii. 3. [3] See earlier pp. 71 f.

victories, its converts did not succeed, as Paul and the writer of the Fourth Gospel had succeeded, in Christianizing the idea of God. Like many converts from paganism to-day, they readily put Christ in the place of all the gods they had loved or feared, and yet they tended to think of the supreme God in a partly pagan way. Thus in the Eastern Church many thought of God as the unknowable infinite of pagan philosophy, and, instead of first seeking to know God in Christ, the attention of the Church was distracted by barren controversies on the relationship of the divinity to the humanity of Christ's person. In the Western Church, there were those who thought of God as the absolute of power, and His love was obscured by emphasis on His predestinating will. Later, theories of the Atonement were advanced which tended still further to conceal the revelation of God's love in Christ.

Among the many factors which have led the modern Church back to the New Testament with its clear message of God made known in Christ, not the least has been the Church's missionary work. Old theologies, whether of the East or West, have proved local and transient. They can not survive transportation into the modern non-Christian world. But Christ has proved intelligible to men of every race. It is the message of Christ alone that the Church has to give to the non-Christian world, for in Him the character of God has been revealed. In bringing the message of Christ to the paganism of to-day, we may learn to rid ourselves of Christian theories derived from a paganism which is now outgrown.

No preaching of Him is truly Christian which is not at the same time a preaching of the holy love of God. He is not one Lord among many ; a rival to pagan gods. He is the revelation of the character of God. There is but one God, and He is known through the Son and in the Spirit. Faced with the bewildering variety of men's thoughts of God, the Church has for its prime message this, that God has been revealed in Jesus Christ. The missionary enterprise of the Church thus necessitates a return from later theories of Christ's person to the New Testament experience of Him as the One in whom God has shown to men His saving grace.

Theories of Christ's person have, indeed, their proper place. Thought has its duties and its rights, and Christian thinkers inevitably seek to find a coherent formula with which to express their faith in Christ which is also a faith in God. Theories of the Trinity and of the Incarnation are not irrelevant impertinences. They are the logical outcome of Christian faith. But they belong, not to faith's immediate utterances, but to its intellectual implicates. They are of subordinate importance. Undue emphasis upon them hides the fact that Christ is not so much a problem as the answer to the problems which we most need to solve.

We cannot ' explain ' Christ's person if by ' explain ' we mean to ' put into a class,' for in confessing Him to be divine we affirm that in His place and function He is without parallel or peer. We cannot even describe His person without being entangled in the antinomies of thought, the relation of the eternal to time, and of the infinite

to space, whilst when we confess Him to be divine, we are speaking of that life of God which must always be beyond our earthly comprehension. But inexplicable though He be, He yet explains the things we most need to know. What does this universe mean? Is it directed by a power hostile or indifferent to our needs, or is there behind all a God whom we can trust and love? What of our own lives? Are they ephemeral or transient. What are we in the world to do and by what standards must life's tasks be judged? These and not the antinomies of thought are the problems we most need to solve. And these problems have in Christ their answer.[1] As one of the most suggestive of Christian thinkers points out, to know Christ is like entering into the choir of some old Gothic church. From outside, the pattern of its stained-glass window seemed meaningless and grey. From within, its meaning and its beauty are luminous and clear.[2] In knowing the Son we know the Father; we know that the holy love Christ's life and death revealed is the final secret of God's character and rule and so must be the standard by which we judge our problems and face our difficulties. Faith in Christ is not an 'extra' to our faith in God. The confession of His divinity is the inevitable expression of the Christian certainty of the truth of the revelation of God we have in Him.

As we have seen, later Buddhism and Islām

[1] For a less inadequate presentation of this approach to Christ's person I would venture to refer to the discussion in my book, *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, pp. 227-47, from which some sentences are taken.

[2] Heim *Glaubensgewissheit*, 1920. p. 200.

were compelled to depart from the clear witness of the early records in order to assign to their founders a superhuman place. But in Christianity the enrichment and deepening of faith have come not by departing from the New Testament, but by a return to the records of the Gospels, and to the classic experience of the New Testament writers that God has been revealed in Christ. Increasingly the character of Buddha and Muhammad is being assimilated by modern Buddhists and Muslims to the character of Jesus Christ, whilst Hindus are giving to their mythic gods the attributes they have discovered in the Jesus of the Gospels. And this is good, but with this alone Christianity cannot be content, and it is the exclusiveness of the Christian claim which causes much offence.

That exclusiveness has sometimes been the exclusiveness of an unjust and unchristian spirit. The representatives of Christianity have at times been more eager to detect the bad than to discover the good in other religions. They have forgotten that all truth is of God, and that the God who has spoken to us in His Son, has spoken also through many a prophet. Yet there is an exclusiveness which is inherent in Christianity. If God has been revealed as holy love in Christ we cannot be content with views which contradict that revelation.

A gifted protagonist of modern Hinduism in his recent lectures at Oxford, remarks that ' for the Hindu,' ' differences in name ' are ' immaterial ' ' since every name, at its best, connotes the same metaphysical and moral perfections.' Different religions may thus be compared to

different colleges of the same University. 'It is a matter of indifference what College we are in, so long as all of them are steeped in the same atmosphere and train us to reach the same ideal. Of course, there will be fanatics holding up Balliol as the best, or Magdalen as modern, but to the impartial spectator the different colleges do not seem to be horizontal levels one higher than the other, but only vertical paths leading to the same summit.' We can agree with him that 'there are good Christians and bad Christians, even as there are good Hindus and bad Hindus,'[1] but the illustration used obscures the real issue. At different Colleges in a University, the same truths are taught. Were that not so, it would not be 'a matter of indifference' to which College a man belonged. Instead, it would be his duty to seek the College where truth was more fully taught. But the different religions, as we have seen, do not teach the same views about God. If God be unknowable, then it may not matter much by what names He is called. But if He can be known, we are bound to try to think of Him as truly as we can.

If, as Christians believe, God has in Christ revealed His holy love, then it matters much that men should know of Him in Christ and by that revelation all lesser ideas of God have to be tested. It is not intolerance ; it is the spontaneous act of Christian love to seek to pass on to others what to the Christian is not only his highest religious idea but certain truth ; God made known to men in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

[1] Prof. Rādhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 46 f.

## IV

# THE DIVINE AND HUMAN NEEDS

Men's thought of the Divine is inseparably connected with their sense of human needs. When these needs are realized only as the elementary needs of food and safety, they may be content to ask from the gods these boons alone. But deeper reflection shows that these are not the only needs of men. A man may be well fed and safe, and yet be in distress. There are three needs no natural gifts can satisfy. They are connected with the three great evils of sin, and sorrow, and the sense of the futility of life. These needs are differently realized in different phases of religion. Some have as their prime concern forgiveness of sin ; others, deliverance from sorrow, others deliverance from the flux and tedium of life.

### In Chinese Religion.

The Sacred Books of China, although regarded as religious books, are primarily concerned with the affairs of this world. They show little sense of man's need of forgiveness, or of his craving for a life which should be not transitory but eternal. The events of this world depend, indeed, on the solemn ordinances of Heaven (Shang-ti) whose punishments afflict the wicked. But if men behave with propriety, they need not fear the anger of Heaven, and so have in him little interest.

Of great importance was the cult of ancestors. By it the needs of the dead were met, and their help obtained in satisfying the desires of the living. Divination was widely practised, but the Sacred Books, as a whole, are interested far less in the invisible than in the visible world. Confucius here is typical of old China, and the 'superior person' whom he described and praised is more like the 'great-souled' man of Aristotle than a religious saint.

We do not know to what extent Confucius and Mencius, his great successor, reflected popular beliefs. Their interest was chiefly in conduct, and to the worship of the spirits they gave only the attention which good manners prescribed. But it is possible that the belief in good and evil spirits had from the first a greater place in popular thought than these great teachers reveal. However that may be, the fear of evil spirits later became intense, and the need most deeply realized was the need of protection against their malice. The whole universe is believed to consist of two spirits, the *Yang* and the *Yin*. With *Yang* is connected light, warmth and life; with *Yin*, darkness, cold and death. Each of these spirits is divided into a vast number of spirits which share its nature. The whole system is thus, as De Groot puts it, 'thoroughly polytheistic and polydaemonistic.'[1] It is this framework that the Relation of the Divine to Human Needs has been construed. Every evil is due to the malignity of some evil spirit, and all the apparatus of religion is employed to secure protection. Thus the Chinese

[1] *The Religion of the Chinese*, p. 5.

Classics, because of their antiquity, are employed as potent charms. Taoism, originally a quietistic monism, has become a profuse polytheism whose priests are chiefly prized as exorcisers. Buddhism, too, has been enlisted in the great struggle, for its vast crowd of gods and godlings are welcome helpers to their worshippers.

Such a system is obviously more secular than religious. The gods are treated as means for the provision of material needs, whilst the deeper needs of men, for forgiveness, and for freedom from sin and from the transitoriness of life have been obscured. Where these needs have been realized, their satisfaction has been sought chiefly from Buddhism. Thus Kuan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy, has been a source of comfort to many, whilst some have gained from Omito-fo,[1] the mythic Lord of the Western Paradise, a sense of divine grace and a hope of future bliss.

### In Hinduism.

In the *Rigveda* the needs which men sought the help of the gods to satisfy were, for the most part, the common needs of unreflective life. There is, indeed, one sublime exception. Before the august splendour of Varuna men felt the need of sin's removal and forgiveness. But even in the hymns to Varuna, the escape from sin is chiefly sought as a means to the escape from punishment. There is little sense of sin's inner stain, though, at times, we can see the recognition that sin entails, not only earthly penalty, but separation from a

[1] The Amitābha of India, the Amida of Japan.

holy God.[1] But the hymns to Varuna are very few, and his worship is already in the background. It was Indra, not Varuna, who was the popular god. Indra was one his worshippers could prize. He was genial and generous to those who gave him the soma drink he loved. He was not a god of holiness, but one depicted as himself, at times, drunken and lustful. In the worship of such a god there could be no deep sense of guilt or sin. The gods were like powerful men on earth. Their favour could be received by gifts, and sacrifices were conceived, not as a covering of sin, or a means of sin's expiation, but as a kind of commerce between the god and his worshipper. Men give that the gods may give. Between the ages of the *Rigveda* and the *Upanishads* there was the age of the *Brāhmanas*. In these dreary books of priestly pedants, sacrifice and asceticism are conceived as the means by which the gods can be coerced to grant men their desires.

First in the *Upanishads* do we find the typically Indian conception of the nature of man's need and of the redemption which he requires. By that time, there had already emerged the belief in *karma* and transmigration. Men felt themselves enmeshed in the cycle of repeated births and liberation from rebirth became the need most keenly felt.

As we have seen, the satisfaction of that need was found in the doctrine that the self of man was one with the great Self of the universe. The recondite speculation of the few was now

[1] e.g. *R. V.* V., lxxxv. 8. "Cast all these sins away like loosened fetters, and, Varuna, let us be thine own beloved."

proclaimed as a message of liberation. For the man who realized that he was one with Brahman there was no rebirth. We have here the answer to that prayer which expresses the deepest aspiration of these venerable books :

' From the unreal (*asat*) lead me to the real (*sat*) !
From darkness lead me to light !
From death lead me to immortality ! '[1]

In this message some seem to have found release from sorrow. Thus we read of one who came to an illumined teacher and complained that, although he knew the *Vedas* and the sacred sayings he did not know the Soul (Ātman). ' It has been heard by me from those who are like you, Sir, that he who knows the soul crosses over sorrow. Such a sorrowing one am I, Sir. Do you, Sir, cause me, who am such a one, to cross over to the other side of sorrow.' And at last the sage gives answer, ' The Soul, indeed, is this whole world. Verily, he who sees this . . . is autonomous ; he has unlimited freedom in all the worlds. But they who know otherwise than this, are heteronomous ; they have perishable worlds ; in all worlds they have no freedom.'[2]

Of this Soul there can be no knowledge. And yet the knowledge of the Unknowable brings liberation :

' What is soundless, touchless, formless, imperishable,
Likewise tasteless, constant, odourless,

[1] *Brih. Up.* i. 3, 28.
[2] *Brih. Up.* vii. 1, 3 and 25, 2.

Without beginning, without end, higher than the great, stable—
By discerning that, one is liberated from the mouth of death.'[1]

Or, as another passage puts it :

'By knowing God (*deva*) there is a falling off of all fetters ;
With distresses destroyed, there is a cessation of birth and death.'[2]

By this knowledge, men knew themselves one with Brahman. 'He, verily, who knows that supreme Brahman, becomes very Brahman. . . . He crosses over sorrow. He crosses over sin. Liberated from the knots of the heart, he becomes immortal.'[3] All that can be said of Âtman-Brahman is that it is. Yet this suffices.

'The wise who perceive Him as standing in oneself,
They, and no others, have eternal peace !
" This is it ! "—thus they recognise
The highest, indescribable happiness.'[4]

Such passages explain the high place which the *Upanishads* have won in the affections of many a devout Hindu. They are an imperishable witness to the truth that,

> 'Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
> Is with infinitude, and only there.'[5]

But the peace which they proclaim was avowedly only for the few who could live unentangled in earth's affairs. It is clear that it was a peace hard

[1] *Kāth. Up.* iii. 15.
[2] *Svet. Up.* i. 11.
[3] *Mund Up.* iii. 2, 9.
[4] *Kāth. Up.* v. 13 f.
[5] Wordsworth's *Prelude*, vi. 604 f.

to win, and harder to retain ; and in the later *Upanishads* especially we find enjoined physical means by which a cataleptic state could be induced so that all self-consciousness might be lost and the unity of the self with Brahman be realized. For those engaged in life's ordinary tasks these books provide no message of deliverance. Such remain in bondage to *karma*, a bondage which good deeds like bad can only intensify. This way of knowledge was only for the few ; for the many there was provided later the way of love.

We have seen with what freshness and power the *Bhagavadgītā* depicts the way of love. It was a way open to all alike, to women as well as men, to low castes as well as to those of the three higher castes. But its teaching on deliverance lacks inner unity. At times it speaks of a redemption won through realizing that all activities arise from the body and so cannot touch the self.[1] At other times it speaks of a redemption won by the practices of *Yoga*.[2] More characteristic of the book is its proclamation of a deliverance gained through reliance on Krishna's love which enables his devotees to act, and yet to act selflessly without thought of the effects of deeds. The book is more concerned with release than with the goal to which release may lead, and the positive content of the salvation it proclaims is slight.

To Sankarāchārya, the great teacher of the way of knowledge, all the acts of religion seem real only

[1] e.g. iii. 27. " Works are done altogether by the Moods of Nature, but he whose self is confounded by the thought of an *I* imagines ' *I* am the doer thereof.' For the influence of the Sānkhyan philosophy here, see *R. H. C.*, pp. 105 f.

[2] e.g., vi. 10-14.

to Nescience. From the point of view of true knowledge Brahman alone is real, and redemption consists in knowing this. 'Release is nothing but being Brahman. Therefore Release is not something to be purified.' It cannot stand 'in the slightest relation to any action except knowledge.'[1] Redemption is thus unrelated to the activities of life. It is only for those still unillumined that the karmic order of gods and men has any meaning. Such must perform meritorious acts and engage in the worship of the gods. Yet deeds and gods alike belong to an order which the man of knowledge knows to be unreal.

For all the consummate skill and sublety of its exposition, Sankara's solution seems inadequate. Religion either deals with realities or it does not. We cannot be indifferent to the existence of the God or gods to whom we pray. And in Hinduism also, the worshipper has prayed to his God as to one real. Sankara himself is held in honour as a devotee, and to him are assigned fervent hymns of love to Siva. But the way of love is a way of self-deception if the god addressed is ultimately unreal.

As we turn to the poet-saints of Hinduism, we find that they are not usually content to speak as if the god they trusted was unreal. As we read the fervent prayers of Tukārām or Mānikka Vāsagar, we feel that their writers believed that the god whom they addressed was both real and active, and was able to help them in their needs. Thus Tukārām prays to Krishna, not for the peace of deliverance alone, but for forgiveness :

[1] *Vedāntasūtras* I. i. 4.

'Guard me, O God, and O, control
The tumult of my restless soul.

Ah, do not, do not cast on me
The guilt of mine iniquity.

My countless sins, I, Tukā, say,
Upon thy loving heart I lay.'[1]

Only in Krishna is his hope.

'Lost, lost, I, God, am I,
Unless thou help me, Tukā—me who cry!'[2]

In the 'Holy Word' of Mānikka Vāsagar we have likewise many a rapt expression of gratitude to Siva. Siva saved him at the first. His grace brings rapture still.

'The mother's thoughtful care her infant feeds:
Thou deign'st with greater love to visit sinful me—
Melting my flesh, flooding my soul with inward light, unfailing rapture's honied sweetness Thou.'[3]

It is impossible to read the poems of these Hindu saints without realizing the fervour of their quest for God. But God was not for them a God revealed. They did not so know of His holy love as to be able to trust the consistency of His character. They brought to their god their needs; they could not measure those needs by knowledge of the awful holy love of God.

Dr. Stanley Jones, speaking of his recent conferences with representatives of various phases of Hinduism, remarks, "While there was sensi-

[1] lxxiv. [2] xlvii. [3] xxxvii. ix.

tiveness to the spiritual and a wistfulness of search, yet the note of finding seemed to be absent.'[1] Hindus have been distinguished beyond others for their eagerness to win redemption, but God has been too variously conceived for there to be a lasting confidence that He is known. Men have sought to relate the Divine to human needs, but always there has been the chilling fear that the Manifestations of the Divine belong themselves to unreality.

## In Buddhism.

As we have seen, it was through his poignant sense of the misery of life that Gautama abandoned comfort and home to seek deliverance from the bondage of rebirth. That deliverance he vainly tried to find by speculation and by austerities. At length, abandoning these ways, he won by meditation 'the consummate peace of *Nirvāna*, which knows neither rebirth nor decay, neither disease nor death, neither sorrow nor impurity,' and thus there arose within him 'the conviction, the insight, that now' his 'Deliverance was assured, that this was' his 'last birth, nor should' he 'ever be born again.' He was tempted at first to keep this Doctrine to himself. It would be hard for mankind 'to understand the stilling of all plastic forces, or the renunciation of all worldly ties, the extirpation of craving, passionlessness, peace and *Nirvāna*.' He thought within himself, 'Were I to preach the Doctrine, and were others not to understand it, that would be labour and annoyance to me!

[1] *Christ at the Round Table*, p. 58.

Yes and on the instant there flashed across my mind these verses, which no man had heard before :

'Must I now preach what I so hardly won ?
Men sunk in sin and lusts would find it hard
To plumb this Doctrine—up stream all the way,
Abstruse, profound, most subtle, hard to grasp.
Dear lusts will blind them that they shall not see,
—In densest mists of ignorance befogged.'

But one of the gods came to him to urge him to proclaim the doctrine. The Buddha yielded to his plea, and set out for Benares there to start his 'Doctrine's wheel, a world purblind to save.'[1]

In spite of the legendary embellishment of the narrative, we may well believe that they contain a true account of the Buddha's quest. Austerity and speculation were in that age the obvious means of seeking to win release, and it is natural to suppose that, when Gautama forsook his home, he turned first to these. The doctrine by which he gained enlightenment was, indeed, recondite, and it is not surprising that, at first, he was reluctant to attempt to preach it far and wide.

It is hard to tell to what extent the Pāli texts give us the teaching of the Buddha. Yet it may well be that we may assign to the Buddha himself the central teaching of early Buddhism, the Holy Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths. It is these two doctrines which are described in his first sermon at Benares.[2]

[1] From the *Ariya Pariyesana-Sutta* E.T., by Lord Chalmers, in *Further Dialogues of the Buddha* i. pp. 113-21. There is a parallel account in the *Mahāvagga* i. (*Vinaya Texts*, i. *S. B. E.* xiii.)

[2] For what follows, see the *Mahāvagga* i. 6.

Repeatedly the Pāli texts assign to Gautama the claim that his was a Middle Path, avoiding the two extremes of sensuality and asceticism. 'A life given to pleasures' is 'degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless'; 'a life given to mortifications' is 'painful, ignoble, and profitless.' Both extremes must be avoided by those who would win enlightenment. The Middle Path is the 'holy eightfold Path,' of 'Right Belief, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Memory, Right Meditation.'

Then follows the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. The medical science of the time spoke of the necessity of knowing the nature, the cause, the cure, and the way to obtain the cure of a disease. Gautama as a physician of the mind uses these four categories.

The First Noble Truth is that of Suffering. Birth is suffering; decay is suffering; illness is suffering; death is suffering.' The Second Noble Truth deals with the Cause of Suffering. It is 'Thirst, that leads to rebirth, accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. It is the thirst for pleasure, for existence, for prosperity. The Third Noble Truth deals with 'the Cessation of Suffering,' 'the abandoning of this thirst,' 'the destruction of desire.' The Fourth Noble Truth speaks of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering. That Path is the Holy Eightfold Path, the Middle Way.

Evidently Gautama felt that there was no need to prove the correctness of his diagnosis of man's need. It was an age when there was a widespread

sense of the misery and futility of life. Gautama did not minimize the fact of human suffering. On the contrary, he emphasized it and bade the sufferer comfort himself with the thought that what he now endures is slight compared with what he and other have endured in previous lives. To Tennyson, sad at Arthur Hallam's death, the reminder that 'loss is common to the race,' brought, not comfort, but an aggravation of his grief.

> 'That loss is common would not make
> My own less bitter, rather more.
> Too common! Never morning wore
> To evening but some heart did break.'

But Tennyson's protest sprang from the sense that life ought not to be unhappy. Gautama held no such view. To him life seemed inherently connected with misery. Resignation could be learnt by recognition of this fact. There was only one way by which escape from misery could be gained, and that was by breaking the chain that led to future births.

In the Second Noble Truth Gautama explains how the cycle of rebirth could be interrupted. There was no self, no soul. What men called the self, or soul, was an ever-changing appearance due to the temporary association together of various bodily and mental factors. This theory is set forth in the Scheme of Dependent Origination in which is shown the cycle of rebirth and life and death.[1] One of the twelve links of this chain

[1] It is given in *L. R. E.* pp. 118 f. For fuller discussions see Oldenberg, *Buddha*[6], pp. 251-90 and Keith *Buddhist Philosophy*, 96-114.

is 'thirst,' 'desire.' This it is within man's power to eliminate, and thus the chain may be broken and release secured. Tradition tells us that it was through the scheme of Dependent Origination that Gautama won enlightenment and became the Buddha. To us, familiar with the inimitable simplicity of some of our Lord's sayings and parables, it is hard to believe that an analysis of being so technical and pedantic, should be an essential part of the Buddha's message. But we have to remember that he lived in an age of acute and subtle speculation. He would not, and could not have said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'[1] The release he preached was available only for those who renounced all earthly ties, and his disciples came, for the most part, from the leisured classes. The abstruseness which repels us would have been to many of that age attractive.

Recondite and obscure as is the Scheme of Dependent Origination which the Pāli tradition assigns to Gautama, his interest was not speculative but practical. Resolutely he refused to answer questions which were merely of theoretical interest. He would not say whether the world was finite or infinite, transient or eternal, nor even whether those who had received his teaching would, or would not, pass on to another existence after death, or if reborn, where they would be reborn. Such views do not conduce to 'aversion, passionlessness, tranquillity, peace, illumination and *Nirvāna*.' When a questioner confessed his disappointment at the Buddha's refusal to answer

[1] cp. Oldenberg, *op. cit.* p. 176.

such questions, the Buddha replied that if a man sees a fire, he may know of what it burns, and if it has gone out he will know that it has gone out, but he will not know where the fire has departed.[1] Elsewhere, Gautama declares that to require him to answer such questions would be as foolish as for a man wounded by a poisoned arrow to demand that before the arrow was taken out the physician should explain who had shot the arrow, and what was the wood of which the bow and arrow were made. 'The man would never get to know all this before death overtook him. And just in the same way, if a man were to say he would not follow the higher life under the Lord until the Lord had answered this pack of questions, he would get no answer from the Truth-finder before death overtook him.' This and this only did the Buddha teach : of Ill, of its origin, of its cessation, and of the path that leads to its cessation. Other questions were 'unprofitable and not fundamental to the higher life'; 'they do not conduce to weariness with mundane things, to passionlessness, to purgation, to tranquillity, to insight, to full enlightenment, and to *Nirvāna*.'[2]

It is useless, therefore, to ask whether *Nirvāna* means extinction, or a continuance after death in untroubled bliss. *Nirvāna* was the highest good. It denoted 'going out' as of a flame ; the cessation of 'thirst,' of the craving for existence. More than this the Buddha would not say. He himself was 'the master with eye divine, the

[1] From the *Aggi-Vacchagotta-Sutta. Further Dialogues of the Buddha* i. lxxii.

[2] From the *Cūla-Mālunkyā-sutta, op. cit.* ii. lxiii.

quencher of griefs.'[1] Many seemed to have gained from him this gift of peace in his own lifetime, whilst in such later books as the *Dhammapada* and *The Psalms of the Early Buddhists* we have many a testimony to the joy of those who learned from his teaching to eschew anger and passion and to win, instead, *Nirvāna's* peace.

Such peace could be won alone by those who abandoned the ties of the world and entered the monastic life. The highest good within the layman's reach was so to live that in another birth there might come to him the opportunity of winning full release. In the *Mahāyāna*, the 'Great Vehicle,' the way of redemption was made open to all alike. *Nirvāna* was now indefinitely postponed. The ideal held up to men is not that of winning in their present lives release from rebirth, but of becoming *Bodhisattvas*, 'future-Buddhas' who, although destined in the end to Buddhahood, postpone, for the sake of others, the attainment of *Nirvāna*. No longer was redemption the prerogative of the monk. All alike could become *Bodhisattvas*. Not unnaturally the preachers of this new Buddhism claimed that this was the Great Vehicle, the Mahāyāna, for it could carry all to salvation, whilst the earlier Buddhism of the Pāli texts they described as the Hīnayāna, the Little Vehicle. The Hindu sects spoke much of the grace of Vishnu and of Siva, and the idea of divine grace was introduced into Buddhism. The merit won by the great *Bodhisattvas* was transferable, and, by trust in Buddhas or in *Bodhisattvas*, salvation could be obtained.

[1] *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* iv. 3. (*S. B. E.* xi. p. 65).

The idea of divine grace is especially prominent in connexion with the simpler Mahāyāna associated with the worship of Amitābha, the mythic Lord of the Western Paradise. Salvation comes by faith, not works. So great is the mercy and the power of this Buddha, that even a man who has committed 'the ten wicked actions, the five deadly sins and the like' will 'if he utter at death the name "Buddha Amitāyus," expiate at every utterance of that name sins which would involve him in births and deaths during eighty millions of *kalpas*. He will, while dying, see a golden lotus flower like the disc of the sun appearing before his eyes; in a moment be born in the World of Highest Happiness.'[1] This worship of Amitābha has had in China much influence. In Japan it is preached by two of the most vigorous of Buddhist sects. Thus Honen,[2] the founder of the Pure Land Sect, declared 'Among all the ways of breaking loose from the chain of life and death there is no better way than to be born again in the pure land of the West. Among all the works that we can do to attain this birth there is none better than to call on the name of Buddha Amida.'[3] And tradition asserts that his dying words were these:

'His rays of light the world on every side pervade;
His grace forsakes not one who calls on him for aid.'[4]

Though Honen taught that salvation was

[1] *Amitāyur-Dhyāna-sūtra* iii. (*S.B.E.* xlix. ii. pp. 197 f.)
[2] He founded the Pure Land, or Jodo Sect, in A.D. 1175.
[3] Haas, *Amida Buddha Unsere Zuflucht*, p. 35. Amida is the Japanese form of Amitābha.
[4] Harada, *The Faith of Japan*, p. 142.

bestowed by the grace of Amida, he yet emphasized the necessity of good works. Shinran,[1] the founder of the True Pure Land Sect, which to-day is the most active of all Japanese Sects of Buddhism, abandoned altogether the idea of meritorious works. 'Whether we are saved because our sins are blotted out we do not know; it is as Amida has ordained. We have nothing to do with it, we have but to believe.'[2] And modern tracts and poems of this school insist that by faith alone men may be saved, and at death go to be with Amida in bliss. We have here a radical transformation in the Buddhist conception of the Divine and Human Needs. Not only is the historic Buddha displaced by the mythic Amida, but instead of an austere message of emancipation to be won by the elimination of desire, there is a Gospel of a divine grace which saves men without regard to any merit they have earned. As a famous epigram of this school declared, 'Even the righteous are saved by faith; how much more the sinning soul.'[3]

## In Zoroastrianism.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the quest for redemption has been primarily a quest for liberation from the futility of life, and that quest has been pursued even to the attempt to secure release from life itself. In Zoroastrianism and early Islām, the emphasis has been laid less on liberation than on the necessity of obedience to the

[1] 1173-1262, the founder of the Jodo-Shin or True Pure Land Sect.

[2] Reischauer *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, p. 112.

[3] Quoted by Saunders, *Epochs in Buddhist History*, p. 180.

revealed will of God, and much that could be discussed in this section can be dealt with more conveniently when, in the next chapter, we pass to the description of the moral ideal.

The Zoroaster of whom the *Gāthās* speak was a prophet of righteousness, summoning men to obey the Truth and shun the Lie. Yet it would be a mistake to think of him primarily as an ethical teacher. The ideal he taught was based on his belief in the righteousness of God, and he gained the courage needed for his work from his confidence that it was God's work that he was doing. He called men to engage in a real fight against evil. They could do so because they knew that in fighting the Lie, they were aiding God in His warfare against wrong.

In the later *Avestā*, as we have seen, Iranian deities resumed their place, whilst the attributes of Ahura Mazdāh became archangels of independent power. In their struggle against evil, men rely, not only on these divine beings, but on the help of Guardian Spirits. Even Ahura Mazdāh is depicted as sacrificing to lesser gods, and thus winning their assistance. Of the old Iranian gods, now worshipped as Angels, Mithra had special importance. To win his favour and avert his anger, men not only offer to him sacrifices, but undergo scourgings to expiate their sins.[1] No longer is salvation held to come alone from obedience to Ahura Mazdah's righteous will. It is necessary to know the correct ritual, and to use the right charms. For the most powerful of all the charms,[2] it is claimed that its use alone is

[1] *Yt.* x. 120 ff. [2] The *Ahuna Vairya*.

sufficient to win Paradise. In the Pahlavi writings, we find a still greater dependence on semi-divine spirits, and there is a new emphasis on the importance of the living providing for the welfare of the dead by propitiatory offerings and prayers. The rediscovery of the *Gāthās* by Western scholars has led to the attempt to abolish this idea of vicarious sacrifice. The reformers rightly urge that, in Zoroaster's stern and simple teaching, a man's weal or woe in the future life depends solely on his conduct here on earth. On the fourth day after death the soul is judged, and neither the sacrifices nor prayers of the living can alter the judgment which it then receives. But reformed and unreformed alike have lost the missionary zeal of the great founder of their religion. Zoroaster saw in his message a means by which he could turn even 'the robber tribe unto the Greatest.'[1] To-day, Zoroastrianism is no longer conscious of possessing a Gospel for the world; it is, instead, the proud monopoly of a small and prosperous community which has no desire to receive converts from those of alien race.

### In Islām.

The conception of salvation in the *Qurān* corresponds closely to its teaching about God. Man was created that he might worship God,[2] and God is willing to guide him into the way of obedience.[3] Man's life is troubled; he is capricious, covetous and sinful. Yet Allāh cares for him, and has revealed His will to him through the prophets.

[1] *Ys.* xxviii. 5. [2] *S.* li. 56. [3] *S.* xx. 122.

The word salvation (*najāt*), we are told, occurs only once in the *Qurān*,[1] but throughout the book we find emphasized man's need for deliverance from future punishment. It is those 'who turn and believe and do that which is right' who shall enter Paradise.[2] Faith is demanded from all alike —from Jew and Christian, as well as from pagan Arabs. It consists in believing 'what hath been sent down to Muhammad.' Through faith men's sins are cancelled, and their hearts disposed aright.[3] Faith must show itself in service to Muhammad's cause. 'The faithful' are those who have 'fled their country, and fought on the path of God, and given the prophet an asylum, and been helpful to him.'[4] The Muslim must live in fear of Allāh, and yet trust his mercy. One sin alone he will not pardon; the worship of other gods. To the faithful he is compassionate, and does not demand more than they are able to perform. The meaning of salvation is summed up in the name of the new religion. It is *Islām*, submission and obedience to the will of God. The true Muslim is he who accepts and obeys the revelation of Allāh which has come through Muhammad his prophet. His fidelity is seen in the confession of Allāh, in the observance of prayers, in the payment of statutory dues and freewill offerings, in the keeping of the fasts, and in making at least one pilgrimage to Mecca.

The conception of salvation in the *Qurān* is thus predominantly legal, and corresponds to its idea of God as the great taskmaster. Yet, as we

[1] W. Stanton, *The Teaching of the Qurān*, p. 56.
[2] *S.* xix. 61. [3] *S.* xlviii. 2. [4] *S.* viii. 75.

have seen, there is, even in the *Qurān*, another conception of God. God is thought of as the one Reality, and it is this conception of God that the Sūfīs later developed. For many of the Sūfīs, the predominant feeling towards God was not fear, but disinterested love. Thus Bishr-i Yāsīn explains that to serve God is to fulfil the obligations of religion, but to love Him is to do works of supererogation.

'Perfect love proceeds from the lover who hopes naught for himself.
What is there to derive in that which has a price?
Certainly the Giver is better for you than the gift;
How should you want the gift, when you possess the very Philosopher's Stone?'[1]

'Love,' says Jalāluddīn 'is the remedy of our pride and self-conceit, the physician of all our infirmities. Only he whose garment is rent by love becomes entirely unselfish.'[2] It is by love that the unitive state is reached.

'I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one;
One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.
I am intoxicated with Love's cup, the two worlds have passed out of my ken.
I have no business save carouse and revelry.'[3]

In the *Qurān* Muhammad is a 'warner.' In no sense is he a Saviour. In later Muslim piety, an increasing place is given to Muhammad's intercession for believers, and the belief is

[1] Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 5.
[2] Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islām*, p. 107.
[3] *op. cit.* p. 96.

common that he 'will make intercession on the Day of Resurrection in the midst of the Judgment, when we shall stand and long to depart even though it be into the Fire.'[1] By some of the Sūfī saints he is depicted as one who will not only intercede for men on the Judgment Day, but will himself forgive. Thus Abdul-Rahīm prays :

'O my Lord, O Apostle of God, O my hope on the day when I shall stand before the Judge !
I beseech thee, by the glory, to forgive the sins which I have committed, and let thy merit weigh down my scales !
Hearken to my prayer and deliver me from the troubles which have befallen me ; comfort me in all my afflictions !
Thou art the nearest in whom we may have hope, albeit thou art far from my house and home.
With thee, O son of Abraham, I seek refuge from my sins and trespasses.

Wilt thou not of thy grace set me free ? My back is laden with heavy sins, for I have walked in perilous ways in company with sinners.
I have broken my covenant with God. O thou who hast kept thy covenant, turn in compassion and loving kindness towards Abdul-Rahim.'[2]

### In Christianity.

We have seen with what marked differences the Living Religions of the East have conceived of the needs of men. In this connexion also we

[1] From the summary of faith by Al-Fudali, translated by D. B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 349.

[2] E. T. by Nicholson, *The Idea of Personality in Sūfism*, p. 67. For a full account of this phase of Islām, see Andrae, *Die Person Muhammeds in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde*, pp. 290-390.

notice, amid the rich diversity, two great types of religious aspiration, the one, as in Zoroastrianism and early Islām, concerned chiefly with escape from the wrath of God by obedience to His will; the other, represented by speculative Hinduism, early Buddhism and the Sūfī movement, concerned chiefly with deliverance from the flux and weariness of life.

As we turn to Christianity, we find that these various needs of men have received different prominence at different times. Thus in the ancient Eastern Church, the influence of Græco-Oriental pessimism led to an eager quest to escape from the corruption of the body. So in Athanasius' great book *On the Incarnation*, Christianity is interpreted chiefly as deliverance from corruption through the 'deification' of our humanity in the Incarnation. In the West, there was more emphasis on the need of deliverance from sin and guilt, and later we find Anselm treating the death of Christ as the means by which was paid the debt man owed to God's honour by reason of his sin. Later still, in Protestant orthodoxy, the idea of punitive justice dominated, and the Christian salvation was regarded primarily as deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin.

Once again we turn from all sub-Christian theories to the classic documents of Christianity, the Gospels with their records of our Lord's teaching, and the Epistles with their interpretation of His meaning.

Jesus spoke much more of God's grace than of human needs. He had come 'to preach good tidings to the poor,' 'to proclaim release to the

captives,' ' to set at liberty them that are bruised.'[1] He spoke of the Kingdom He proclaimed as a blessing so great that to win it a man would be wise to give all that he has, like a man buying a field containing treasure, or like a merchant selling everything of lesser value to buy a pearl of great price. Yet the graciousness and radiancy of His teaching did not spring from a light estimate of human needs. It was with a demand for repentance that He began His mission, and only in irony did He speak of those who were ' whole ' and needed no physician. Always He assumed that men needed to change their ways, and spoke with mingled awe and wonder of God's forgiving love. Rejecting the casuistry of the Scribes, He yet demanded a righteousness greater than that of the Scribes and Pharisees. It was not enough to refrain from outward acts of impurity and violence. He demanded from His followers purity and love in thought as well as deed, and that singleness of aim by which alone God could be known.

Exacting as were His demands, and sombre as was His estimate of human needs, He yet regarded His message as a Gospel which was every man's concern. No class and no person was too depraved to share in God's love. He was known as the friend of tax-gatherers and sinners. He compared the divine quest for the sinner to that of a shepherd seeking the one lost sheep or to that of a housewife seeking the money she has lost and cannot spare. ' There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.'[2]

[1] Luke iv. 18. [2] Luke xv. 10.

A modern Jewish writer has remarked on the novelty of this endeavour to seek out the lost until the lost be found. 'The summons not to wait till they meet you in your sheltered and ordered path, but to go forth and seek out and redeem the sinner and the fallen, the passion to heal and bring back to God the wretched and the outcast—all this I do not find in Rabbinism ; *that* form of love seems missing.'[1] The history of religions shows how rare has been the quest to seek and save the lost. As we have seen, Zoroaster hoped to convert even robber-tribes to the truth ; modern Pārsīs are reluctant to receive any convert. Some phases of the Mahāyāna Buddhism speak of a grace which would save the sinner. Gautama himself hesitated to give to the world his message, and, for the most part, contented himself with preaching to Brāhmans and nobles who had leisure to understand his recondite teaching. In Hinduism, the way of redemption by knowledge is restricted, as Sankara points out, to men of the three highest castes who alone may read the *Vedas*. Even the *Bhagavadgītā*, which throws open its way of love to women and to outcastes, lacks the impulse to save the lost. As Sundar Singh reminds us, 'Krishna says "In every age I am born to save the good and to destroy the wicked." Jesus on the contrary came to save sinners.'[2]

God's grace for Jesus was fundamental. Because of His sense of the adequacy of God's

[1] C. G. Montefiore, *The Spirit of Judaism* (*The Beginning of Christianity* i. p. 79.)
[2] Heiler, *The Gospel of Sādhu Sundar Singh*, p. 244.

love, although Jesus made from men severe demands, He thought of His message, not as a demand but as a Gospel. The weary and the heavy laden would find in Him not a 'yoke' only, but rest unto their souls. Salvation was not something that could be earned. When we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants, we have done only what it was our duty to do. It is God who gives the Kingdom; it does not come by man's work alone. The Kingdom means 'not that we believe in God, but that God manifests Himself to us; not that we call upon God with a childlike heart, but that He recognizes us as His children and honours us with the name of sons.'[1]

Christ's message of the Kingdom was thus concerned not only with sin and guilt but with sorrow and the sense of life's futility. As a recent writer well remarks, 'the whole spirit' of the Gospels is 'one of conquering optimism. They record the greatest attack in all history on sin and death.' 'Not only unbelief, hatred, and despair, but disease, famine, storm, and death itself, go down before the Prince of Life.'[2] Already His followers were God's children; already there were available for them those resources of the Kingdom of which His works of healing were evidence. Because it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom, His little flock had no need to fear. Anxiety was thus condemned as lack of faith. The Father knows His children's needs, and can answer them.

[1] Titius *Jesu Lehre vom Reiche Gottes*, p. 104.
[2] Cairns, *The Faith that Rebels*, p. 43.

Later Christian thought has depicted Jesus as sad and emaciated. But that is not what the Gospels record. He was one interested in the homely sights of the countryside and drew from them illustrations for His teaching. Children came to Him unbidden as they will not do to one austere and stern. His enemies complained of Him that He came 'eating and drinking.' He knew how to win the confidence and friendship of simple and unlettered folk. Yet although He did not scorn, like many an Eastern seer, the things of time, He spoke as if the eternal was the real. But His sense of the eternal did not rob life of its meaning. Already His followers might know God as Father, and trust Him with a child-like faith.

The seeming failure of His work did not destroy His confidence. When the time of His rejection by the people drew near, He spoke plainly to His disciples of the sufferings and death He must endure, and of the cross which they too must carry. He was the Son of Man, but a Son of Man quite different from that of which the Jewish Apocalyptists had dreamed. He had come not to be ministered unto but to minister : Like the Suffering Servant of Isaiah liii, He would give His life as 'a ransom for the many.'

Of this new message of salvation also St. Paul was the greatest exponent in the early church. As a Jew he had believed that salvation had to be earned, and his attempt thus to earn salvation had led him to a despairing sense of failure. To such a one the Christian claim that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah was deeply offensive. If

recompense was, as he believed, the final principle of God's rule, it was incredible that one who had perished on the shameful cross should be the sent of God. At his conversion, he not only discovered that God was a God of grace ; he gained a strange power and peace. He knew now that God was a God who forgave, who had reconciled the world to Himself in Christ. With many others of his age, St. Paul conceived the present age to be ruled over by hostile powers. From these powers he now was liberated. He knew himself forgiven. God was His Father ; he was in Christ Jesus ; he felt operative in him the powers of the Spirit. Christianity thus meant for him a new life of trust and service. In the holy love of Christ upon the Cross he saw the supreme expression of the holy love of God. Already he lived in the eternal as in the present, for the eternal was not for him the unknown. Its meaning and its content were given to him in Christ ; in the power of the spirit he had already the first instalment of the glory of the Age to come, that eternal life in which in part he already shared. Sorrow thus lost for him its bitterness. Because of Christ, he could be 'more than conqueror,' confident that nothing could separate him from the love of God in Christ. Sorrow was not merely assuaged. It became a means of equipment for further service. He could comfort others by the comfort he had himself received. In his weakness, he was strong.[1]

We find the same experience expressed in the

[1] cp. 2 Cor. iv. 19 ; xiii. 14 ; Rom. v. 8 ; Eph. i. 14 ; 2 Cor. i. 22. Rom. viii. 37 ff. 2 Cor. i. 4-6 ; xii. 10.

Johannine writings. The love of God is the love of Christ, and that love means forgiveness and deliverance from all the powers of evil. Christ lifted up draws all men to Him. God loves the world and has given Christ that men, believing in Him, may have eternal life.

Inevitably men express the salvation they experience in Christ in terms of the world-view of their age and place. Thus St. Paul, like others of his time, conceived of the ills which oppress the soul as half-personal or personal antagonists,[1] and by many converts from animism to-day the Christian salvation is similarly expressed. Christ is, in the first place, the deliverer from fear—the fear associated in their minds with demons. In the West, we no longer think of two 'ages'; one ruled over by the powers of evil, the other, the 'age to come,' ruled over by God alone.

Although the categories by which men describe their ills are transient and local, the Christian experience is fundamentally the same. In differing degrees, men find in Christ a salvation which meets the three great needs: deliverance from sin and guilt, from pain, and from the sense of the futility of life. God is known in Christ as a God who forgives. Yet the Cross which is the supreme expression of God's forgiving love is, at the same time, sin's condemnation. Sin was thus exposed in its final meaning. Sin led men to hate and kill the Holy One of God. Thus the Cross becomes the symbol, not of love's defeat, but of love's

[1] Thus Sin, Law, "Wrath," and Death, were for him semi-personal antagonists, whilst Satan and the demons were deadly enemies from whose malice he sought deliverance. (cf. *The Gospel of St. Paul*, pp. 122-52.)

victory ; love conquered there, not hate. The love of the crucified is known to be the love of the eternal God, and this love has reproductive power. 'The love of Christ constrains us.' And pain takes a new meaning. Its mystery remains, and yet its bitterness is in part removed. Christ shared our human pain, and the sufferer in his lesser sorrows can learn, though it be with faltering speech, to re-echo the words of Jesus in the Garden of His agony and on the Cross, and to call God 'Father.' This present life is not the end. It derives its meaning from the life that is eternal, and that eternal life is already present. The God of eternity is the God who has manifested Himself in time ; the God with whom already we may have a communion which death will not interrupt but consummate.

We have seen how Gautama bade men save themselves, whilst Muhammad claimed only to be a 'warner,' proclaiming future bliss to the obedient, and the torment of hell to those who rejected his message. In Hinduism, redemption has been taught by means of intuition. Subsequent history shows the inadequacy of these ways of redemption. In Buddhism we have the rise and present influence of Mahāyāna sects which rely for salvation on the grace of Buddhas or of *Bodhisattvas*. In Islām, Muhammad is by many regarded, not as a 'warner' only, but as one on whose intercession the faithful can rely for their forgiveness. In Hinduism, the way of knowledge has been succeeded by ways of love in which the worshipper seeks help from mythic gods. These developments are a witness to man's sense that he

cannot save himself ; if he is to win deliverance it must be through divine help.

That divine help is found in Christianity in God's manifestation of Himself in Christ. Much as Christians may differ in their interpretations of Christianity, and in their reaction to the ills of life, they are at one in confessing that in Christ they have the answer to their need. Men's world-view varies from age to age. New needs emerge as the range of Christianity is increased by its missionary work. The formulations of one age cease to satisfy the age which succeeds. Western interpretations of Christianity prove unsatisfying to many in the East. But Christ remains. New needs reveal in Him new meaning and impel us to a fuller exploration of His message. He belongs not to one age and place alone. Men of every age and land can find in Him their Saviour.

## V

# THE MORAL IDEAL AND ITS REALIZATION

The moral ideal in any religion is intimately connected with its conception of the Divine. Where the Divine is held to be manifested in many ways, the moral ideal is confused and varying. The moral ideal can only gain from religion unity and content, when religion speaks of a God whose character is known and consistent.

As we shall see, the importance given to the moral ideal and its realization varies in the two great religious types. Where God is conceived as personal will, obedience to Him becomes the supreme end of religion. Where He is held to be unknown, the supreme object of religion is to win deliverance from the flux or futility of life, and the ethical is valued chiefly as a means to that end, and thus tends to be regarded as only of preliminary importance.

### In Chinese Religion.

We have already noted the interest in good conduct which marks the ancient literature of China. Heaven, the supreme god, was the guardian of the moral order, and it was by virtue that Heaven's favour was to be won. In popular religion there was the cult of ancestors, and with this cult of ancestors there went the strong insistence on filial piety.

The ethical ideals of ancient China found in Confucius, not only their greatest teacher, but their personal embodiment. He claimed to be, not 'a begetter,' but only a 'transmitter' of the truth, but the veneration in which he was later held did much to secure admiration for the moral teaching he transmitted. For him correct conduct was man's highest goal and he sought himself, not only to do the right, but to lead others to follow it. The fulfilment of duty was man's greatest obligation, and the way of duty seemed to him clear. It was expressed by the idea of 'reciprocity.' In that one word he saw 'a rule of practice for all one's life.' 'What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.'[1] This principle did not involve returning good for evil. When asked if 'injury should be recompensed with kindness,' Confucius replied 'Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness.'[2]

Although in its negative form the Golden Rule lacks the amplitude of the Christian ideal, it yet expressed a demand which it is very hard to meet. And this Confucius realized. When a disciple claimed, 'What I do not wish men to do to me, I also wish not to do to men,' he replied, 'You have not attained to that.'[3] 'Reciprocity' covered the duties of every station in life. The ruler must rule justly; the subject must obey the just ruler. Husband and wife, parents and children, must fulfil their mutual obligations. In this way tranquillity and justice would be secured.

Of the religious basis of his ethics, Confucius spoke but little. Yet he felt that Heaven knew

[1] *Ana.* xv. 23. [2] *op. cit.* xiii. 36. [3] *op. cit.* v. 11.

him, and believed that Heaven could be best pleased, not by worship, but by virtue. If Confucius' ideal of the 'superior man' lacks the fervour of the saint devoted to God's service, his ideal was an exalted one. Virtue is regarded as man's highest good, and virtue must be pursued at any cost. 'The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete.'[1]

These ethical ideals found powerful expression in the writings of Mencius. To him, too, virtue seemed natural to man, and with even greater optimism he asserts man's power to fulfil its behests. 'Men have these four principles (of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and knowledge of good and evil) just as they have their four limbs.'[2] 'The tendency of man's nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to good, just as all water flows downwards.'[3] 'If men do what is not good, the blame cannot be imputed to their natural powers.'[4]

To follow Virtue seemed to Mencius a far nobler aim than to seek for earthly honours. 'Benevolence, righteousness, self-consecration, and fidelity, with unwearied joy in these virtues; these constitute the nobility of Heaven.' To win high office in the state 'constitutes the nobility of man.''[5] Virtue is thus of Heaven's appointment, and is within the reach of man. But of Heaven Mencius spoke little. It was man's duty, not

[1] *op. cit.* xv. 8. [2] II. Pt. I. vi. 5 f. [3] VI. Pt. I. ii. 2.
[4] VI. Pt. I. vi. 6. [5] VI. Pt. I. xvi.

God's grace, which gained his interest. A good life is sufficient satisfaction. 'Honour virtue and delight in righteousness, and you may always be perfectly satisfied.'[1] His teaching approached the ethical sublimity of the second great command of Christ, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' He had no realization of the first and more fundamental command, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength.'[2]

Later, as we shall see, the ethical ideal of China was enriched by the fervid teaching of universal love by some of the teachers of Mahāyāna Buddhism, whilst also the obligations of morality were reinforced by the lurid pictures which Buddhism provided of the torments which in a future life await the wrongdoer. Still more influential has been the growth of the belief in spectres which, as De Groot says, became not only 'the main inducement to the worship of Heaven,' but also 'a principal pillar in the building of morality.'[3] Through this belief in spectres the cruelty and violence of the powerful have been restrained, for the spectres of those killed or driven to suicide can work much harm to those who have done them wrong. Besides, Heaven is the one sure defence against the power of spectres and only the virtuous man can hope to win Heaven's help.

Till recent years the worship of ancestors has led to the exaltation of filial piety as the first and most binding of all virtues, whilst the influence

[1] VII. Pt. I. ix. 3.
[2] cp. Legge, *The Chinese Classics* II. p. 76.
[3] *The Religion of the Chinese*, pp. 19 and 22.

of Confucius and his school has tended to a dignified conservatism, and thus has helped to give stability to a society based on mutual obligation. To-day that conservatism has gone. With the violent and abrupt emancipation from traditional loyalties and duties, the old ideals have lost their power. China is distracted and confused, not from political reasons only, but for lack of a moral ideal which can compel the allegiance of modern men.

### In Hinduism.

In the most ancient of Hindu scriptures, the *Rigveda*, there is depicted a society as yet but little perplexed with the problem of the nature of the Moral Ideal and its Realization. As an inheritance from still more ancient times, there is the belief in the Order (*rita*) of the universe on which depends, not only the course of nature, but the moral law. Of this Order the sublime Âdityas were the special guardians. As we have seen, it is in connexion with the worship of Varuna, the greatest of the Âdityas, that we find the frequent confession of sin and prayer for pardon. But the worship of Varuna had already lost its influence. The largest number of hymns are devoted to Agni and to Indra. Agni as the domestic fire was the homely friend of man ; as the sacrificial fire, he burnt up sin's contamination. Indra was a genial god, but devoid of moral greatness. Indra's drunkenness is spoken of with cynical mockery, and in some of the hymns sacrifices are already praised as having coercive

power over the gods to whom they were offered. When the naïve polytheism of the bulk of the Rigvedic hymns ceased to satisfy, men turned, not to the quest of one holy God, but of a unitary principle of being, and in the last book of the *Rigveda* we have already the beginnings of that monistic speculation for which morality was of subordinate importance.

The *Brāhmanas*, which reflect the age succeeding that of the *Rigveda*, show a singular lack of interest in morality. It was an age of priestly supremacy in which the priests claimed to be 'the human gods', and taught that so important was their work that without the sacrifices they offer the sun would not rise. One virtue is, indeed, enjoined: the virtue of truth. The gods are 'glorious' because they 'speak the truth,' 'glorious therefore is he who knowing this, speaks the truth.'[1] But this conception of truth seems to have little moral content. It is not truth in ordinary life that is commended but exactitude in fulfilling the ritual of the sacrifices.[2] The gods are depicted as lecherous and cruel, jealous of men and of each other. The incest of the great god Prajāpati with his daughter is, indeed, condemned, but even that gross offence does not make him less divine.[3]

The duties of man are at times described as debts. His debt to the gods he must pay by

[1] *Sat. Br.* I. i. 1, 5.

[2] As Prof. Keith says, "The nature of the truth is not vitally moral: it is strictly confined to the precise carrying out of the rites and utterances of the formulae of the sacrificial ritual" *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, ii. p. 471.

[3] *Sat. Br.* I. 7, 4, 1-3.

sacrifices ; to the *Rishis*, the seers of old, by the study of the *Veda* ; to his ancestors, by begetting a son ; to men, by showing hospitality. ' Whoever does all these things, has discharged his duties : by him all is obtained, all is conquered.'[1]

In the *Upanishads* the idea of recompense is developed into the doctrine of *karma* and transmigration. The ' debts ' left unpaid in this life have to be paid in future existences. It seems not unnatural to suppose that it was in reaction from this rigid rule of retribution that the other great doctrine of Hinduism, the identity of the self with Brahman, gained such wide influence. The doctrine of *karma* made of recompense an undeviating law ; the doctrine of redemption through the intuitive realization of unity with Brahman ignored altogether the effect of deeds. Redemption thus conceived is unrelated to character, for it consists in the recognition of a relationship already existent. It is a redemption whose nearest analogy is deep and dreamless sleep ; good works like bad, belong to a sphere which to true knowledge is unreal. Even Deussen, who regards this doctrine as ' one of the most decisive and striking expressions of eternal philosophic truth,' admits that this knowledge is ' like an ice-cold breath which checks every development and benumbs all life.'[2] To the man who knows that his self is one with the great Self of the universe, deeds cease to have any meaning. ' As water adheres not to the leaf of a lotus-flower, so evil action adheres not to him who

[1] *Sat. Br.* I. 7, 2. 1-5.
[2] *The Philosophy of the Upanishads.* E.T., pp. 361 f.

knows this.'[1] The man who knows Brahman '*looks down*' '*upon good deeds and evil deeds*,' '*just as one driving a chariot looks down upon the two chariot-wheels* [which in their revolutions do not touch him]'.[2] The Ātman, like the Brahman, is described as '*apart from the right, and apart from the unright*'[3] and the man who knows the Ātman shares in this indifference to ethical distinctions. He is not followed by good, he is not followed by evil, for then he has passed beyond all sorrows of the heart.'[4]

In at least one passage this indifference to moral distinctions is stated with repulsive frankness.[5] Elsewhere good deeds are regarded as a necessary preliminary to redemption. Thus there is this verse which is often quoted to-day by Hindu defenders of the *Upanishads* :

'Not he who has not ceased from bad conduct,
Not he who is not tranquil, not he who is not composed,
Not he who is not of peaceful mind,
Can obtain Him (the Ātman) by intelligence.'[6]

But at the best morality was only on the circumference of interest. Not renewal of character, but an identity with the undifferentiated Absolute was the prime quest of these ancient seers.

It was not easy to reconcile this ideal with the obligation already felt for each man to fulfil the

[1] *Chhānd. Up.* iv. 14. Prof. Hopkins takes these words to mean '*not that the sage may sin and be free, but that one free from attachment sheds sin, is not attached to it*,' though he admits that popular belief endorsed the wrong meaning. *Ethics of India*, p. 66.

[2] *Kāth. Up.* ii, 14.

[3] *Kaush. Up.* iii. 1.

[4] *Kaush. Up.*, i. 4.

[5] *Brih. Up.* iv. 3, 22.

[6] *Kāth. Up.* i. 2, 24.

duties of the caste in which he is born. The Law Books in general assign greater importance to the life of the householder than do the *Upanishads*. Thus it is even claimed that as 'the householder offers sacrifices,' 'practises austerities,' 'distributes gifts,' 'therefore is the order of householders the first of all.'[1] But there is much confusion. As one of these books puts it, 'Some (teachers say) "He who has finished his studentship may become an ascetic immediately"' but others 'prescribe the profession of asceticism after the completion of the seventieth year, and after the children have been firmly settled in (the performance of) their sacred duties.'[2]

In the *Bhagavadgītā*, a way was found to enable a man to fulfil the duties of his caste, and yet remain free from the effect of deeds. It does not, indeed, reject the ancient method of seeking emancipation by flight from the world, austerity and meditation, but it is more concerned to teach a new way of salvation which could be won by men engaged in life's ordinary activities. There is a rule of works (*yoga*) which is higher than the casting off of works (*sannyāsa*). 'He who hates not and desires not should be deemed to have everlastingly cast off works.'[3] Thus a man can do the duties of his caste and yet not be bound to the effect of deeds.

The idea of caste inevitably involves an absence of a common moral standard. What is the duty of one caste may for another caste be wrong. Yet

[1] *Institutes of Vishnu*, lix. 28. (*S.B.E.* vii., p. 194.)
[2] *Baudhāyana* II. 10, 17, 2 and 5. (*S.B.E.* xiv. p. 273.)
[3] *B.G.* v. 2 f. *Sannyāsa* is the method of life of the *sannyāsī*, the Hindu ascetic.

it seems hardly fair to blame the author of the *Gītā* for his failure to transcend the ethical limitations which are inherent in the idea of caste. What is of more significance is his attempt to throw open the way of redemption to those still engaged in active life. Arjuna as a knight had the duties of a soldier. It is hard to reconcile with the task of killing, the moral ideal which the book enjoins. But that ideal is not devoid of beauty and sublimity. 'Hateless towards all born beings, friendly and pitiful, void of the thought of a *Mine* and an *I*, bearing indifferently pain and pleasure, patient, ever content' is 'the Man of the Rule.' He is one 'before whom the world is not dismayed and who is not dismayed before the world, who is void of joy, impatience, fear and dismay, desireless, pure, skilful, impartial, free from terrors, who renounces all undertakings,' 'indifferent to foe and friend, indifferent in honour and dishonour, in heat and in cold, in joy and in pain, free of attachment, who holds in equal account praise and blame, silent, content with whatever befall, homeless, firm of judgment, possessed of devotion.'[1] These virtues are passive, not active; they speak of resignation, not of service. The ideal of selfless activity lacks the positive content of unselfish love, but it is an ideal compared with which Western aggressiveness seems to many Hindus noisy and unattractive.

Part of the distinctive greatness of the *Gītā* lies in its attempt to relate its moral ideal to the character of the god whom it proclaims. But the Krishna of the *Gītā* is not a historic figure; he is

[1] *B.G.* xii. 13-9.

the product of imagination and imagination can be degraded as well as pure. The *Gītā* is itself an episode inserted into the vast epic of the *Mahābhārata*, and in popular Hinduism the stories of the two great epics of India, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*, have had much influence in forming moral ideals. The epics contain stories of men and women of noble character. Loveliest of all is the story of Sītā, Rāma's much-tried wife, who is still held up to Indian girlhood as the pattern of wifely chastity and submissiveness. But even in the Epics some of the stories told of the gods are degrading, whilst the Krishna of some of the later *Purānas* is the embodiment of wanton lust. In Christianity, the highest moral ideal is to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect, and that moral perfection is to be seen in the historic Christ. Hinduism has lacked this unifying knowledge of a God who has revealed to men His holy love. Many Hindus are nobler far than the gods to whom they pray, and the warning has to be given that men must not act as do their gods.[1]

The way of knowledge spoke of a conception of redemption which involves that moral activity is, at best, of subordinate importance. The way of love has likewise failed to relate redemption to man's moral task. The stress of modern life and the influence of Christian teaching have led many Hindus to seek the good of their Motherland and to purify Hindu society of its ancient evils. Yet

[1] cp. the *Rāmāyana* of Tulsī Dās I. *Dohā* 79 quoted on p. 3-26 So Mānikka Vāsagar speaks often in his poems of the way the charms of the temple women hindered his devotion to Siva, yet nowhere does he condemn the presence of these sacred prostitutes in Saivite temples.

it is hard to work for the unfortunate if, as the doctrine of *karma* teaches, they are working out an inexorable fate. When Mr. Gandhi returned from South Africa, even orthodox Hindus proclaimed him as the true *sannyāsī*. We have here a complete transformation of the moral ideal; the 'holy man' is no longer one who renounces activity but one who seeks the good of the oppressed. But social reformers complain that religion is the greatest hindrance in their path. Hindus are turning from the unworthy stories of the *Purānas* to the *Gītā* with its noble conception of Krishna which, in turn, is often unconsciously assimilated to the Jesus of the Gospels. But the Krishna of the *Gītā* is a mythic figure. The modern ideal of a service to the Motherland which transcends the bounds of caste, needs a new sanction—the conception of one holy God whose character can be the norm of human effort, and the content of the moral ideal.

## In Buddhism.

Although Gautama the Buddha ranks among the most influential ethical teachers of our race, we cannot rightly claim that ethics was his chief concern. What weighed upon him was not the moral evil of the world, but the misery and futility of life. The message of redemption he proclaimed had as its prime aim, not the purification of character, but release from the cycle of rebirth by the elimination of 'thirst' or desire. His moral teaching was a means to this end. The holy eightfold Path could not of itself secure the

cessation of misery. It was preliminary to the elimination of desire.[1]

As we have seen, Gautama spoke of *Nirvāna* as the greatest blessing, and yet refused to say in what it consisted. It is not surprising then that in his ethical teaching he was more concerned to give prohibitions than positive commands. Laymen as well as monks must abstain from killing, stealing, impurity, lying and drinking intoxicating liquors. Monks were also required to be entirely continent, to eat food only at stated hours, and not to take part in dancing, music or theatrical performances. They were forbidden to anoint the body, to sleep on a high or wide bed, and to possess any money.

It is a misconception of Gautama's mission to speak of him as a social reformer intent on combating oppression. His way of redemption was, indeed, open to the low castes, but that was because the monk had left the world-order to which caste belongs. Gautama condemned the arrogance of the Brāhmans who refused to heed his teaching, but the early texts narrate with pride that most of his converts were of noble birth. The way of deliverance was open only to those who could renounce the world. The best that the layman could secure was this : by good conduct and generosity to earn a future birth in which would come to him the opportunity of redemption.

From the monk there was required not only a complete assent to the Four Noble Truths, but

[1] For this noble Eightfold Path—right belief, aspiration, speech, conduct, means of livelihood, endeavour, memory meditation—see earlier, p. 157.

righteousness, wisdom and love. No part of the ethical teaching of early Buddhism is more attractive than its teaching in regard to love. Often it is claimed that the love enjoined is the same as Christian love. That seems a misunderstanding. Buddhism, as Prof. Oldenberg pointed out, demands not so much that a man should love his enemy, as that he should not hate him ; he must regard his enemy with tranquil kindness.[1] No duty receives more emphasis than this duty of universal, if somewhat cold, benevolence.

> ' As, recking naught of self, a mother's love
> Enfolds and cherishes her only son,
> So through the world let thy compassion move
> And compass living creatures every one ;
> Soaring and sinking in unfettered liberty,
> Free from ill-will, purged of all enmity ! ' [2]

Yet even here the figure of a mother's love is used not to inculcate love's warmth, but its universal obligation. The monk must free himself from every tie. Tradition asserts that when Gautama knew that his wife had borne him a son he called him Rāhula, a 'fetter,' and, when he set out on his quest for emancipation, he left wife and child behind.

Deliverance means calm, and that calm no hate may violate. An early text assigns to Gautama the injunction, ' If villainous bandits were to carve you limb from limb with a two-handled saw, even then the man that should give way to anger would not be obeying my teaching. Even then it would

[1] *Buddha*[2] p. 335.
[2] *Sutta Nipāta* 149, E.T., by Saunders. *Epochs in Buddhist History*, p. 22.

be your task to preserve your hearts unmoved, never to allow an ill word to pass your lips, but always to abide in compassion and goodwill, with no hate in your hearts, enfolding in radiant thoughts of love the bandit (who tortures you) and proceeding thence to enfold the whole world in your radiant thought of love, thoughts vast and beyond measure, in which no hatred is or thought of harm.'[1]

Such teaching finds beautiful expression in the *Dhammapada*, *The Way of Virtue*, an early Buddhist book of hymns. He is the true Brāhman ' who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with fault-finders, and free from passion among the passionate ' ; ' from whom anger and hatred, pride and envy, have dropt like a mustard seed from the point of a needle ' ; ' who is bright like the moon, pure, serene, undisturbed, and in whom all gaiety is extinct ' ; ' who has left what gives pleasure and what gives pain, who is cold, and free from all germs (of renewed life), the hero who has conquered all the worlds.'[2] ' " He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me "—in those who harbour such thoughts hatred will never cease. " He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me "—in those who do not harbour such thoughts hatred will cease. For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time : hatred ceases by love.'[3]

Love is thus an essential part of that self-perfection which early Buddhism demanded of its

[1] *Kakacūpama-sutta.* (*Further Dialogues of the Buddha* I. xxi.)
[2] *Dhammapada.* (*S.B.E.* x) 406 f., 413, 418.
[3] *Op. cit*, 3 ff.

monks. It is a love which has not lost the thought of self. Hatred is to be avoided as a hindrance to a man's own peace. As Prof. Keith puts it, 'The Buddhist will endure injuries and insults; he will seek no revenge and offer no resistance; but he does so because selfmastery is greater to him than anything else.'[1] Such love may far transcend common Christian practice. It cannot be identified with the love which Christ taught and showed.

In the Mahāyāna Buddhism as we have seen the ideal is no longer that of the *Arhat*, the monk who wins for himself *Nirvāna*, but the *Bodhisattva*, who, although on the way to Buddhahood, delays his entrance into *Nirvāna* in order that he may have opportunity to save others. This transformation of ideal gave to the Buddhist conception of love a warmer and more positive content. It was an ideal which was within the reach of all. Indeed, the most praised of gifts was one which only a married man could make, the gift of wife or child to meet another's need. No longer must a man seek to accumulate merit for himself alone. In imitation of the *Bodhisattvas*, he should be willing to confer on others the benefit of the merits he had won.

We may illustrate this new ideal from Sāntideva's beautiful little book, *The Path of Light*.[2] The writer professes his desire to imitate the compassion of the *Bodhisattvas*. 'In reward for all the righteousness that I have won by my works I would fain become a soother of all the sorrows of all creatures. May I be a balm to the

[1] *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 117.
[2] From L. D. Barnett's E.T. of the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*.

sick, their healer and servitor, until sickness come never again ; may I quench with rains of food and drink the anguish of hunger and thirst ; may I be in the famine of the ages' end their drink and meat ; may I become an unfailing store to the poor, and serve them with manifold things for their need. My own being and my pleasures, all my righteousness in the past, present and future I surrender indifferently that all creatures may win to their end. The Stillness lies in surrender of all things, and my spirit is fain for the Stillness ; if I must surrender all, it is best to give it for fellow-creatures. I yield myself to all living things to deal with me as they list ; they may smite or revile me for ever, bestrew me with dust, play with my body, laugh and wanton ; I have given them my body, why should I care ?' ' May all who slander me, or do me hurt, or jeer at me, gain a share in Enlightenment.[1] The book concludes with the prayer that all the merit the writer has accumulated may be used for the good of others. ' Through this my merit may all beings cease from every sin, and everlastingly do righteousness.' ' As long as the heavens and the earth abide, may I continue to overcome the world's sorrows. May all the world's suffering be cast upon me, and may the world be made happy by all the merits of the *Bodhisattva*.'[2]

We find the same emphasis on active and sacrificial love in a Mahāyāna book, the *Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*, which, in its Chinese form, is described by De Groot, its translator, as ' the principal instrument of the great Buddhist art

[1] E.T. pp. 44 f. [2] E.T. pp. 27 f.

of salvation,' and thus ' the most important of the Sacred Books of the East.'[1] The book enjoins the ways of meditation and penitence, but it is the way of compassion which it most extols. Vengeance is forbidden even against the murderers of parents.[2] Hospitality must be practised, whatever be its cost. A *Bodhisattva*, if he has nothing else to offer, must ' sell himself, his sons, his daughters, cut off even the flesh of his body, and sell that, in order to meet the stranger's needs.'[3] By voice and pen he must preach to others the way of salvation. If he has no other means of writing, he must use his own blood as ink and his bones as pencils.[4] Such teaching, for all its extravagance, may well have done much as De Groot claims ' in ameliorating the customs and mitigating the cruelty ' of China.[5] Buddhism, as we have seen, has been utilized in China in that war against the spectres which has been the most conspicuous element in popular religion. But it has had its influence also in revealing the beauty of self-sacrificing love.

In the passages we have been studying, the self-sacrificing love is of the good for the bad, the wise for the ignorant. In China, the Buddhist ideal has been assimilated to that of Confucianism, and self-sacrificing love is connected especially with that filial piety which has been to recent times the most praised of all the virtues. Thus in one of the many stories which are told of Kuan-yin, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, her high estate is

[1] *Le Code du Mahāyāna en Chine.* For a brief summary see *L.R.E.* pp. 164 ff.
[2] 10th Commandment.
[3] 26th Commandment.
[4] 44th Commandment. [5] *The Religion of the Chinese*, p. 188.

explained by her devotion to her father. Her father, angry at her resolve to remain unmarried, treated her as a servant, and later had her executed. At death, she went to purgatory, and purgatory at once became paradise. Yama, the god of the dead, to save his purgatory, restored her to the world, and, in her new life on earth, she performed many miracles to help those is distress. Her father, in his rage, had killed five hundred Buddhist monks, and burned their monastery. In consequence, his allotted time of life was shortened by twenty years and for every monk whom he had killed an ulcer grew on his body. In his distress, he went for advice to an aged monk who was his daughter in disguise. The monk told him that the only medicine which could cure him was the eye and an arm of a blood relative, and promised that a nun in the convent would make for him this offering. The eye and arm were boiled, and mixed with medicine, were rubbed on his body, and he was cured. It was his daughter Kuan-yin who thus sacrificed herself for her unworthy father.[1] So, too, we read of Buddhist tracts which extol the merit of a woman who, cutting off a piece of flesh from her arm, cooks it to provide a medicine to save her father-in-law from sleeplessness, or of a woman who cuts off a piece of her own liver to give it as a medicine for her mother-in-law.[2] The sacrifice, in accordance with the Chinese ideals of filial piety and reverence, is thus the sacrifice of the young for the old, or of women for men.

[1] Hodous *Buddhism and Buddhists in China*, p. 30 f.
[2] *op. cit*, p. 33.

In Japan, as we have seen, the most energetic and influential sect of Buddhism is the True Pure Land Sect, where devotion is given, not to the historic Buddha, but to Amida, the mythic Lord of the Western Paradise.[1] In this sect, the idea of merit is entirely abandoned. Even its priests may marry and be householders. No sect has shown so great a power of imitating the activities of Christianity. No longer is salvation regarded as something to be earned. Salvation comes through faith alone, and, in trust in Amida's grace, the faithful are urged to live lives of service.

### In Zoroastrianism.

In Zoroastrianism and in early Islām the ethical ideal is of supreme importance for religion has as its prime concern not deliverance from the misery of life, but obedience to the revealed will of God.

Thus Zoroaster, like another Amos, summoned men to be followers of God and to show their fidelity by truth and righteousness. He invokes the help of 'Best Thought, the mighty Dominion' of Ahura Mazdāh, that by their help he and his followers may 'vanquish the Lie.' Mazdāh had ordained at the first that each man should 'exercise choice' at his own free will. God knows all that a man does, and as he acts he will be rewarded.[1] The ethical ideal of Zoroaster is simple and austere. It is an ideal which may be conveniently studied in the marriage-hymn for his daughter. The bride and bridegroom are enjoined to 'seek the pleasure of Mazdāh with

[1] See earlier pp. 93 f. and 163.

thought, word, and actions.' 'Let each of you strive to excel the other in the Right, for it will be a prize for that one.' 'Bliss shall flee from them that despise righteousness. In such wise do ye destroy for yourselves the spiritual Life.'[2] Life is a great conflict between good and evil, in which every believing man must play his part with courage and faithfulness.

In the later *Avestā*, this plain moral teaching is overlaid with prohibitions concerned with the trivialities of ritual cleanness. It is difficult to take seriously the scale of 'stripes' allotted for the breach of its injunctions. Probably they were meant to be commuted by money payments. Ceremonial transgressions are held in as much abhorrence as moral offences. Thus the man who allows the combings of his hair or the paring of his nails to fall upon the earth must suffer the penalty of death.[3] Especially heinous is the defilement of the pure elements of earth and fire. Thus to 'bury in the earth either the corpse of a dog or the corpse of a man, is an offence to be punished by thousands of stripes. If the evil-doer does not disinter it within the end of the second year,' 'it is a trespass for which there is no atonement, for ever and ever.'[4]

It is not surprising that in modern times this emphasis on ritual cleanness has been found oppressive. Especially have reformers complained of the segregation of women at certain

[1] *Ys.* xxxi. 4, 11 ff. [2] *Ys.* liii. 2, 5 f.
[3] *Vdd.* xvii. 1-11. Unless these are buried in a hole with appropriate charms they increase the baleful strength of the Daevas (demons) as much as if they were a sacrifice offered to them. [4] *Vdd.* iii. 36-9.

periods due to the belief that they are then inhabited by demons so that their very looks defile,[1] and, although their husband or child be dying, they may not give a last glance at their loved ones. The attempt is being made to revive the ethical simplicity of Zoroaster's teaching. Modern Pārsīs are famous for the wealth of their great merchant princes, and for the generous philanthropy which allows no member of the community to be in want. The reformers are not content with this alone, and are seeking to repristinate the plain and wholesome ideals of Zoroaster. As Dr. Dhalla, a learned Pārsī high-priest, has written, 'Righteousness rests on the individual's piety, and not on a scrupulous observance of ceremonials, or a practice of elaborate lustrations. Let the Pārsī individually, and his community collectively, abide steadfast in the path of righteousness, and they will be practising true Zoroastrianism.'[2] But reformers complain of the secular outlook of their co-religionists. Zoroaster's moral earnestness sprang from his intense faith in God. Custom can secure obedience to ceremonial requirements, but devotion to an ethical ideal is dependent on a vivid sense of God for its vitality.

## In Islām.

The revelation which Muhammad claimed to bring was not of God only but of human duty, and

[1] cf. *Vdd.* xvi. In the *Ardā Virāf*, xx, the soul of Virāf sees the soul of a woman enduring in hell a horrible and filthy punishment because at one such period she had 'approached water and fire.'

[2] *Zoroastrian Theology*, p. 371.

the ethical ideal of Islam covers the whole range of private and of public life.

Scattered throughout the *Qurān* are many commands dealing with character and conduct. Men must shun idolatry and fornication. They must not, for fear of poverty, destroy their offspring. They must be generous and hospitable. They must show justice to the orphan and fulfil their compacts. They must avoid pride.[1] The ideal presented is, as Muhammad often emphasizes, well within men's reach. God is compassionate. He does not ask more than men can fulfil. One new command only did Muhammad give—the command to engage in the *jihād*, the Sacred War. This command is in contradiction to his earlier enactments. 'Let there be no compulsion in Religion.'[2] 'Fight for the cause of God against those who fight against you: but commit not the injustice of attacking them first.'[3] The 'verse of the sword' instead decrees, 'When the sacred months are passed, kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them; and seize them, besiege them, and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush: but if they shall convert, and observe prayer, and pay the obligatory alms, then let them go their way, for God is Gracious, Merciful.'"[4]

In his regulations of family life, Muhammad did not make from his followers any exacting demands. Each man might have four wives, provided he acted to each 'equitably.' In addition

[1] cp. *S.* xvii. 24-39, the longest of these lists of commands and prohibitions.

[2] *S.* ii. 257. [3] *S.* ii. 186. [4] *S.* ix. 5.

he might cohabit with any of his slaves, but not with married women, unless they had been captured in war.[1] 'Men are superior to women' and 'virtuous women are obedient.' Disobedient wives are to be punished. 'Chide those for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear; remove them into beds apart, and scourge them: but if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them.'[2] Means of conciliating husbands and wives are provided. Divorce is easy for the husband. He has only to utter thrice the words of dismissal, though four months must pass before the wife is sent away.[3] Muhammad had as a special privilege a larger number of wives than was allowed to his followers. Tradition represents him as an indulgent husband, vexed often by the complainings and disputings of his wives.

The moral ideal of the *Qurān* bears the impress of the Arabia of Muhammad's age. Muhammad did not claim to be sinless, but, after his death, his words and deeds became normative for his followers. Many as are the commands recorded in the *Qurān*, they became insufficient to cover every case of the more complex life of a Muslim world, enriched by conquest. Traditions (*Hadīth*) were collected to give the necessary guidance, and in these Traditions can be traced the development of the moral ideals of early Islām. Some of them deal with trivialities of etiquette, for even in such matters Muhammad was a pattern to his followers.[4] Many enjoin the duties of hospitality

[1] *S.* iv. 3, 28. [2] *S.* iv. 38. [3] *S.* ii. 226.

[4] *e.g.* meat is to be bitten off from the joint with the teeth, not cut off with a knife. (Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islām*, p. 127.)

and almsgiving and of showing mercy to slaves. The Sacred War receives extravagant praise. 'He that contends in the way of God but the time between two milkings of a camel, paradise is his due.'[1] On women, the Traditions speak with a double voice. They report that Muhammad said 'the best property in the world is a virtuous woman,' and that, 'a Muslim must not hate his wife ; if he dislike her for one trait let him find pleasure in another.' But they report also a Tradition which, as Prof. Guillaume says, 'must either be officially repudiated or for ever condemn the system which enshrines it.' 'Whenever a woman vexes her husband in this world, his wife among the houris of Paradise says : "Do not vex him (May God slay thee !) for he is only a guest with thee. He will soon leave thee and come to us." '[2]

The Traditions were too inconsistent to form in themselves a certain guide to conduct. Different schools of jurisprudence arose which sought to codify their teaching, and four of these have still great importance. The orthodox Muslim is under obligation to obey the decisions of the *muftī* of his school and, in this way, conduct is controlled by casuistry.

In many of the Sūfīs we find a transformed ideal. In some of them the quest for unity with God led to the claim to be above moral distinctions. Thus Jalāluddīn could say :

[1] Guillaume, *op. cit.* p. 111.

[2] Guillaume, *op. cit.* pp. 124 f. As Prof. Guillaume remarks, 'it is a logical inference from the *Qurān* itself that if Muslims in paradise are to be gratified by the possession of houris there will be no place for their wives of this world.'

'The man of God is beyond infidelity and faith,
To the man of God right and wrong are both alike.'[1]

Such a claim could lead to antinomian licence. In Jalāluddīn it expressed the sense that the saint has passed beyond the need of law. In others, we have a quietism in which fear is gone, and love alone remains. Not only is Muhammad depicted as the perfect man. This stern Arab chieftain is depicted as the embodiment of that mild and merciful love which these Sūfīs greatly prized. So great is his pity, that he blames none, and is patient with all wrong-doers. He is described as 'poor and humble, self-abasing, misunderstood by the world, mild, forgiving, kind and compassionate to all,' and in this way, there is presented a moral ideal which suggests to Christian readers the Sermon on the Mount.[2]

In recent times Western education has produced immense changes in the Islamic world. In Turkey, once the home of a reactionary Islām, there has been the rapid emancipation of women which has led to the abandonment of the veil, and movements towards monogamy. In India, the attempt has been made by reformers like Syed Ameer Alī to explain away all in Muhammad's life which is offensive to modern sentiment, and to assimilate his character to that of Christ, and, in this way, to transform the moral ideal, whilst preserving loyalty to Islām. It used to be said that Islām could not change ; in many countries

[1] *Mystics of Islām*, p. 95.
[2] Andrae *Die Person Muhammeds*, pp. 226 ff.

it has changed. But it is not easy to relate the new ideals to the ancient faith.

### In Christianity.

By educated men in the East to-day no claim which Christians make for Christ is so readily accepted as that of His pre-eminence as an ethical teacher. Yet it is a misunderstanding of Christ's message to regard it as primarily concerned with moral instruction.

Of the rudiments of morality there was no need for our Lord to speak. He lived among Jews who had already learnt to associate piety with character, and to recognize that God demanded, not worship only, but justice and mercy. His age was one in which the attempt to make of Judaism a law covering all the details of conduct had overlaid the simple, austere teaching of the prophets with the casuistry of the Scribes. Christ was no casuist, and made no attempt to legislate for his followers. He was less interested in the outer act than with the inner motive. If the heart was pure and loving, purity and love would be shown in deed.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that Christ had but one message : the character of God. The ideals He held up to His followers are merely the reflection of His estimate of God. Treated in isolation, His precepts often seem self-contradictory. But they cannot be thus treated. What seem to be His precepts are primarily illustrations of His principles. They describe from various angles the nature of the life lived in humble surrender to the God of love whom He revealed.

It is this which explains what would otherwise

be unintelligible. No teacher of whom we have record has made from men demands harder to fulfil. Christ required purity, not of act alone, but of thought, and abstinence, not from acts of hatred only, but from hate. His followers must be ready to forgive however often they are wronged. Such demands seem quite beyond human attainment, and, if taken in isolation, might well drive to despair those who accept their obligation. Yet our Lord spoke of His message as a Gospel, and described His yoke, in contrast to that of the Scribes, as easy, and His burden as light. All things were possible with God, and demands that men could not meet alone became possible through God's help.

Our Lord was not primarily an ethical but a religious teacher, and yet His religious teaching was ethical through and through. He would have no man call Him 'Lord, Lord' unless he sought to do the things which He commanded. He bade men trust in God as Father, but that sonship with God had to show itself in acts of brotherhood. They are blessed who reveal the character of God's children, who are dissatisfied with their moral attainments, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are meek, and merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, ready to be persecuted for righteousness' sake. It was a hard and narrow way along which He would have men walk, but it was a way which all could tread. It was a way which was independent of the prerogatives of race or class or sex. One thing alone was required: the childlike heart which trusts in God as Father and seeks to do His will.

This ideal of filial trust and brotherly service finds in our Lord's own life its perfect expression. Later, as the title of one of the loveliest of medieval books reminds us, men spoke of the 'Imitation of Christ.' That is not a New Testament phrase,[1] and the ideal which it expresses led inevitably to the conception of a double morality; the evangelical counsels for the few, the evangelical precepts for the many. Nowhere does our Lord speak as if He desired from His followers a slavish imitation. He Himself was homeless and unmarried, and at that time of crisis and of peril, there were those who were called to be 'eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.' But He was no ascetic. Nowhere does He speak as if the married could not truly serve God. Instead, He speaks of marriage as God's ordinance. He called little children to Him, and bade men, if they would see the Kingdom, become like little children in their responsiveness and expectancy. Our Lord had but one calling: to be the world's redeemer. He dealt with men one by one in their individual needs and circumstances. Each in his own calling could be God's son and do His will. We have to be faithful in our callings as He was in His, and in that sense to imitate Him. But we cannot copy mechanically His acts. The breadwinner at his work, the mother in the home, may live as God's children. Christ sought from His followers not reproduction of His acts, but the spirit of filial obedience and trust.

[1] St. Paul does, indeed, say, 'be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ' (1 Cor. xi. 1), but he is speaking not of an attempt to reproduce the acts of Christ, but of the need of showing His spirit of forbearing love.

As we turn to the classic interpretation of Christianity given in the Epistles, we cannot fail to note the absence of any attempt to draw up a code of regulations of universal application. Thus St. Paul, although he refers to words of Jesus in dealing with the problem of marriage and divorce, makes no attempt to form from Christ's words a new legalism. Instead, he reminds his converts that they have 'the mind of Christ.' The glory of God was now visible 'in the face of Jesus Christ,' and by the holy love of God revealed in Christ all life's problems had to be judged. Thus in dealing with the perplexing questions of a growing Church in a pagan world, he returns, time after time, to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. He was not prepared to legislate for the world outside the Church, or to lay down rules which later ages must obey. Even with his own converts, he relied, not on enactments, but on their possession of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. The love of Christ has constraining power, and love must determine each man's act.

It is significant that St. Paul's appeals to his converts to fulfil simple duties are based on his sublimest statements of Christian truth. Thus, when he would have his Gentile converts give generously to the collection for the Jerusalem poor, he reminds them of 'the grace of Christ' who 'though he was rich,' 'became poor.' In dealing with dissension in a Church, he does not attempt to adjudicate between the offenders; he pleads with them to have the mind of Christ who grasped

not at His equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and becoming obedient even unto death. Every problem had thus to be judged by the remembrance of God's grace in Christ. The 'meekness and gentleness' of Christ was known in all the Churches, and faith in Him entailed the reproduction of His love. When St. Paul would describe the ideal of Christian character, he describes love's nature in terms which are obviously derived from the Christian tradition of the character of Jesus. Christians were meant to be in the world like colonists of the heavenly Kingdom. They must live as befitted their high estate.[1] We find substantially the same teaching in the Johannine writings. The only law is the new command of love. Christians must love each other even as Christ loved them. There is no need for a code of regulations. The Spirit will be with them and will guide them into all truth.[2]

There is thus a unity and simplicity in the ethical teaching of the New Testament which seems to be without parallel in the Sacred Scriptures of the Living Religions of the East. It is a unity and simplicity due to the possession of a norm of human character in the revelation of God in Christ.

In speculative Hinduism, as the ultimate Reality is conceived as attributeless, ethics have only a subordinate place. As God is held to be unknowable, the idea of the Divine provides no

[1] cp. 1 Cor. ii. 16; Gal. v. 22; 2 Cor. viii. 10; Phil. ii. 5-8; 2 Cor. x. 1; 1 Cor. xiii. 4-7; Phil. iii. 19 f.

[2] cp. John xiii. 34 and 1 John iii. 23; John xiv. 26, and 1 John ii. 27.

norm for human character. In the Hindu way of love, the mythic gods are often less noble than their worshippers, and men have to be warned against the peril of seeking to imitate their gods. Early Buddhism must have owed much of its first success to the calm and gracious figure of the Buddha, but the ideal which he presented could, in its completeness, be followed only by those able to forsake life's common tasks. As we have seen, the most active phases of Buddhism to-day are those of the Pure Land and True Pure Land Sects, which open the way of salvation to all, but which do so by ignoring the historic Buddha. In Islām the sayings and the doings of Muhammad were normative for the first Muslims, but when Islām had to face the problems of a more complex civilization, it was necessary to invent further Traditions of the Prophet's life. To-day, apart from the Wahhābīs, few Muslims are content with the teaching of the *Qurān* alone. Among men sensitive to modern influences, Muhammad can only be retained as a moral ideal by the sublimation of his character. Thus men convinced that monogamy is better than polygamy, have to explain away the Prophet's many wives.[1] Moral advance has come, not by a return to Muhammad's teaching, but by a departure from it. But in Christianity moral advance has come, not by departing from the Jesus of the Gospels, but by a more faithful obedience to His ideals.

The claim for the ethical superiority of

[1] cp. Ameer Alī's attempt to show that in his many marriages Muhammad was actuated by altruistic motives and 'was undergoing a sacrifice of no light a character,' *The Spirit of Islām*, p. 190.

Christianity has sometimes been made arrogantly, as if it were a claim for the inherent superiority of the West to the East. It is always easier to see the mote in another's eye than the beam in our own. The West sees and condemns readily what it regards as the moral failings of the East. But the East sees as clearly the moral failings of the West, and complains of its pride, its selfishness and arrogance. But the East does not complain that the West is too Christian, but that it is not Christian enough. With the extension of Christianity, the Christian ideal has not become superseded or outworn. The life and death of Christ, by revealing God, reveal also the values by which the moral ideal must be conceived and realized. The Kingdom which He preached and lived is not God's end alone, but man's. In it can be realized the good both of the individual and of society. The Christian ideal is not to be found in isolated precepts. Had Christ given a code of laws, it would have been applicable only to His own age and place. Instead, the Christian ideal finds its unity and permanence in the revelation of God in Christ. There we know the holy love of God, and that holy love revealed in Christ gives to the moral ideal its content and its sanction.

## VI

# THE MEANING AND THE PERMANENCE OF LIFE

If belief in the permanence of life be more than the naïve expression of the instinct of self-preservation, it is intimately related to an estimate of life's present meaning. Where, as in early Buddhism and in some phases of Hinduism, life is regarded as an ill, its continuance is naturally feared, and release is sought from life itself. In Zoroastrianism and early Islām, as this present life is regarded as the sphere in which choice has to be made between good and evil, belief in the permanence of life is firmly held, for, in the future life, the good will receive abundant blessings, and the evil their due punishment. Where, as in Christianity, God is regarded as the God who has revealed to men His holy love, communion with Him becomes a present reality, and the confidence is gained that at death the communion with God begun on earth will be, not interrupted, but consummated.

### In Chinese Religion.

The Sacred Books of China assume that life has meaning, and find that meaning in the fulfilment of virtue, but they show little interest in the relation of the meaning of the present life to the

life to come. The worship of ancestors was, indeed, prominent, but that worship of the dead was an extension of the filial piety shown to the living. As we have seen, Confucius and Mencius speak little of the future life. It is with the duties of the present that they are occupied. It seems unjust to speak in consequence of their irreligion. We remember how the great Old Testament prophets likewise ignored the popular belief in the existence of the dead, and concentrated their attention on the problems of this life. Yet there is a difference. These prophets summoned men to a vivid faith in Jehovah, and thus prepared the way for an experience of communion with God from which could come the certainty that such communion would be eternal. These Chinese teachers' faith in Heaven was less personal and intense, and so could not lead to that sense of communion with Him of which faith in immortality is the inevitable outcome.

This dim faith in Heaven was supplemented by belief in a vast crowd of good and evil spirits, many of whom were the spirits of dead men and women. And from Buddhism came vivid pictures of the bliss of the good and the awful torments of the damned. Yet, although the belief in the survival after death was strongly held, the civilization of China remained essentially secular. Belief in the world to come was chiefly connected with the need of appeasing the spectres that may do men harm. Thus even belief in the life to come was interpreted through the necessities of this present life.

## In Hinduism.

The *Rigveda* is the expression of an age in which there was a simple sensuous joy in the good things of life. The sublime Ādityas, of whom Varuna was chief, were feared, and there was the dread of demons who delighted to do men harm. But, in general, it was believed that the gods were kind, and that, by offerings to them, their help and protection could be secured. So life was prized, and men desired to 'survive a hundred lengthened autumns.'[1] When at length they had to die, they looked forward to a life in that bright sphere over which reigned Yama, the first of men to die. There they hoped to be 'immortal in the realm of eager wish and strong desire, the region of the radiant Moon, where food and full delight are found,' 'where happiness and transports, where joys and felicities combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled.'[2]

In the last book of the *Rigveda* we can trace a growing interest in the future life. The dead would be united with the Fathers and with Yama, and also with the sacrifices and gifts which they had made on earth.[3] Heaven was conceived, not as a dim realm of disembodied spirits, but as a place of light where the spirits receive bodies in which they may enjoy more fully joys like those of earth.[4] The living sacrifice to the dead in

[1] *R.V.* x. 18, 4.

[2] *R.V.* x. 14, 7 f. It is possible that we have in this conception of the treasure accumulated by sacrifices and gifts the germ of the later doctrine of *karma*. cp. H.D. Griswold *The Religion of the Rigveda*, p. 318.

[3] *R.V.* ix. 113, 10 f.

[4] As A. B. Keith points out, in the *Atharvaveda* (iv. 32, 2) among these delights are mentioned those of sexual love. (*The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda* ii. p. 407).

the hope that the Fathers who 'joy in their offering in the midst of heaven' will give them 'health and strength without a trouble.'[1]

Of the fate of evil-doers the *Rigveda* speaks but little. By their misdeeds they create for themselves the deep place of hell,[2] and, in one hymn, Indra and Soma are invoked to—

> 'plunge the wicked in the depths, yea, cast them into darkness that hath no support,
> So that not one of them may ever thence return: so that your wrathful might prevail and conquer them.'[3]

But the bulk of these hymns express not fear but confidence. Life on earth was good; life in heaven would be better still.

Of asceticism we find in the *Rigveda* little trace, though one late hymn speaks of the holy man 'with flowing locks' clad in 'garments soiled of yellow hue,' whose power enables him to be to those in need 'a sweet, most delightful friend.'[4] In the *Brāhmanas*, austerity is greatly praised, but it is praised, not because life is evil, but because by it the gods could be subdued, and man's desires thus gratified. Dreary as was the period which these books reflect, it was life not death men sought, and by now there was the fear of death, not in this life alone, but in the life to come. With this dread of future death, we find the hope of future birth, which might lead again to life on earth, for rebirth was as

[1] *R.V.* x. 15, 14, 4.
[2] *R.V.* vii. 104, 3.
[3] *R.V.* iv. 5, 5.
[4] *R.V.* x. 136.

yet regarded as a boon and not a curse.[1] Already we find traces of that belief in the retributive adaptation of circumstances and conduct which the doctrines of *karma* was later to express, for it is taught that a man is born into the world which he has made.[2] Such references are few, and seem to be little more than stray surmises. First in the *Upanishads* do we find the clear formulation of that doctrine of transmigration and of *karma*, which became the distinctive feature of Indian thought.

The earliest reference to this doctrine in the *Upanishads* seems to be found in obscure words assigned to the great Brāhman sage, Yājnavalkya. By the path of knowledge the wise man might gain the endless world. When asked about those not thus redeemed, he refused to answer in public, but in private declared that 'one becomes good by good action, bad by bad action.'[3] In the same *Upanishad* Yājnavalkya expounds his secret in metaphors which have become the commonplaces of Indian thought. The soul passes from body to body, like a caterpillar, passing from leaf to leaf, and makes for itself new embodiments, like a goldsmith remodelling a piece of gold. 'The doer of good deeds becomes good. The doer of evil deeds becomes evil.' 'As is his desire, such is his resolve; as is his resolve, such the action he performs; what action he performs, that he procures for himself.'[4]

[1] *Sat. Br.* I, 5, 3, 14. I have embodied in the next few paragraphs some sentences from my Drew Lecture on *Rebirth or Immortality*, published later in the *Expositor*, February, 1923.

[2] *op. cit.* vi. 2, 2, 27.

[3] *Brih. Up* III. 2, 6, 13.

[4] *Brih. Up.* IV. 4, 3-5.

The doctrine, thus isolated, is plain and intelligible. A man's acts create his destiny, and the soul wins for itself in the next birth an embodiment which corresponds to its acts in this. But in a country so conservative as India, the old is rarely displaced entirely by the new, and this new and mysterious doctrine of soul-wandering was combined with the early eschatology which spoke of the world where Yama, the first man, ruled over the spirits of the blessed. Men went there by the *Way of the Fathers*. From it, the evil were shot out. For them there was only the lower darkness. A higher way there was, the *Way of Gods*, by which Agni bore the sacrificial offerings to the gods, and by that way also men might ascend to enjoy the bliss of the gods. The classic texts for the doctrine of transmigration and *karma* incorporate with this doctrine these earlier views. In the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* it is taught that the wise pass up by the *Way of the Gods* to the world of Brahman, from which there is no return; the devout pass by the *Way of the Fathers* to the moon, and, after enjoying there the fruit of their good works, are born again on earth; the careless, after death are born on earth as noxious insects.[1] In the parallel passage, in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, a differentiation is made among those who journey along the *Way of the Fathers* to the moon. Those of 'pleasant conduct' here will obtain a 'pleasant birth' in one of the high castes. Those of repulsive conduct will have a repulsive birth, and be born as dog, or swine, or outcaste.'[2]

[1] *op. cit.* VI. 2, 16.

[2] *Chhānd.* Up. V. 10, 7.

As retribution is thus introduced into the *Way of the Fathers*, there is no need for the third path mentioned in the *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad*, yet that, too, is retained, and this confusion has become an integral part of later Indian thought. Such are the classic texts for the Hindu doctrine of transmigration and *karma*. Their inconsistencies are manifest, and, in the *Upanishads* themselves, the attempt is made to reconcile them. Thus in the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* it is taught that all who depart from this world go to the moon. Only later do the two paths diverge, so that those who are unfit to dwell there descend as rain and are born 'either as a worm, or a moth, or as a fish, or as a bird, or as a lion, or as a wild boar, or as a snake, or as a tiger, or as a person, or as some other in this or that condition, he is born again here according to his deeds, according to his knowledge.'[1]

The *Upanishads* are not systematic works, and it would be unreasonable to expect to find in them clear and consistent teaching. But the difficulties of this doctrine become not less but more apparent when it receives systematic treatment as in the great exposition of the Vedānta by Sankarāchārya.[2] Popular Hinduism has not been content to leave to future births on earth the retribution of wrong deeds done in this,

[1] *Kaush. Up.* i. 2.

[2] For this see *R.H.C.*, pp. 92-5. Thus on *Sūtra* III. i. 8. Sankara, confronted with the problem of explaining why there should be rebirth if good deeds are rewarded in the moon, and evil deeds in hell, explains that as a courtier has to leave the king's court 'when all his things are worn out so that he is perhaps left with only a pair of shoes and an umbrella,' so 'the soul when possessing only a small particle of the effects of its works can no longer remain in the sphere of the moon.'

but depicts with lurid detail, not only the loathsome births which await the sinner here, but the terrifying and appropriate torments which he must suffer first in hell.[1]

Difficult and inconsistent as is the doctrine of transmigration and of *karma*, this doctrine has become the axiom of Hindu thought. As we have seen, this belief in *karma* has had for its correlate an estimate of life which makes life appear an evil to be shunned. A Western poet can sing :

> ' This life holds nothing good for us ;
> But it ends soon, and never more can be ;
> But we know nothing of it ere our birth,
> And can know nothing when consigned to earth.
> I ponder these thoughts, and they comfort me.'

' This life holds nothing good for us.' That to later Hinduism seemed an obvious truth. But life recurs and recurs, and escape from the bondage of rebirth became the supreme quest of Indian thought. It was a quest which led, as we have seen, to a view of redemption which ignored altogether the effects of deeds, a redemption to be won through the intuitive realization of the unity of the self with Brahman. For some of those who first proclaimed this way of liberation it is clear that this redemption was held to be real and blessed. But it was not redemption into a fuller life. It was a redemption whose nearest analogy was a dreamless sleep. Not life, but life's cessation, seemed the highest good within man's reach.

[1] e.g. *The Institutes of Vishnu* XLIII. (*S.B.E.* vii. pp. 140-6.).

It is significant that some of those who have sought to find redemption, not by the way of knowledge, but the way of love, have in their devotion to their god desired a continuance of life which would enable their communion with him to be made complete. Thus the words assigned to Krishna is the *Gītā* have brought, and still bring, comfort to many. 'To Me thou shalt come. I make thee a truthful promise; thou art very dear to Me. Surrendering all the Laws, come for refuge to Me alone. I will deliver thee from all sins; grieve not.'[1] Though Mānikka Vāsagar speaks at times of absorption into Siva, at other times he speaks with deep emotion of his desire to live with Siva in Siva's world. And Tukārām had so great a joy in Krishna that he could even prefer rebirth on earth to an absorption in the Infinite, which would bring to an end his communion with the god he loved. All earth's sorrows were worth while if only Krishna be near to help.

'Hear, O God, my supplication,—
Do not grant me Liberation.

'Tis what men so much desire,
Yet how much this joy is higher.

Heavenly joy is not for me,
For it passeth speedily.

But that name how strangely dear,
That in songs of praise we hear!

Ah, says Tukā, it is this
Makes our lives so full of bliss.'[2]

[1] *B.G.* xviii. 65 f.
[2] *Psalms of Marāthā Saints* xcii. verses 1, 2, 5, 6, 8.

Even Rāmprasād Sen, who thought of the Divine in the capricious form of the Mother-goddess, could declare, 'What is the worth of salvation if it means absorption, the mixing of water with water? Sugar I love to eat, but I have no wish to become sugar.'[1]

Once again we notice the conflict in Hinduism between head and heart. But although the desires of the heart may overrule for the time the conclusions of the mind, the utterances of the Hindu saints betray an uneasy sense that the seers of Hinduism may be right; the gods and their worshippers belong to the sphere of unreality.

In modern Hinduism there is increasingly a new estimate of life which as yet lacks the sanction of religion. Through the belief in *karma*, Hinduism has taught that this world is getting steadily worse. The golden age was at the first; this is the 'iron age.' No longer are men content to look back to a glorious past. Instead, they look forward to the time when a rejuvenated India will be able to enter with its ancient heritage into the comity of nations, taking there a place of honour and of service. Yet the belief in *karma*, and the sense that the highest life is quiescent and inactive, makes struggle for the Motherland very hard. It is significant that the most costly personal service for the downtrodden has come from members of a Reform Movement like the Prārthanā Samāj which ignores or rejects the belief in *karma*. In eloquent words, a modern leader like Dr. Rabindranath Tagore protests against the idea that only

[1] *Bengali Religious Lyrics Sākta* xv.

by deserting the world can God be found. 'Who is there that thinks the union with God and man is to be found in some secluded enjoyment of his own imaginings away from the sky-towering temple of the greatness of humanity, which the whole of mankind in sunshine and storm is toiling to erect through the ages.' 'He who thinks to reach God by running away from the world, when and where does he expect to meet him? How far can he fly—can he fly till he flies to nothingness itself? No, the coward who would fly can nowhere find him. We must be brave enough to be able to say: We are reaching him here in this very spot, now at this very moment.'[1] We hear to-day much of 'the Practical Vedānta.' It is Svāmī Vivekānanda's phrase. Yet what sanction has our service if, as he declared, this present life is 'the hypnotized life,' the 'false life,' which cannot be reconciled 'with the ideal'? Or what meaning has moral effort if, as he taught, sin is only an illusion[2]?

The watchword of the hour is service for the Motherland, and quietism seems less attractive than it did. This new ethical ideal carries with it a new estimate of life's meaning. It needs for its correlate a new estimate of life's consummation. A redemption, whose nearest analogy is dreamless sleep, has lost its interest for many who are alert and active. If service be the ideal of life, then absorption into the insentient cannot permanently be regarded as life's highest goal.

[1] *Sādhanā*, pp. 129 f.

[2] *The Practical Vedānta*, Part I, reprinted in *Lectures on Jnāna Yoga*. (*Prabuddha Bhārata Vedānta Library Series*. Minerva Press, Madras.)

Instead, there is required a new conception of the life to come, which sees in it, not life's cessation, but the perfection and completion of a life which already gains from trust in God its impulse and its meaning.

In Buddhism.

Early Buddhism can only be understood as it is studied in the context of the age in which it arose. As we have seen, that age was marked by the growing acceptance of the belief in *karma* and transmigration, and, in consequence, by an eager quest for deliverance from the cycle of rebirth. Gautama shared to the full the sombre estimate of life which marked his age. The first Noble Truth was the truth of sorrow and that truth seemed to him too obvious to need demonstration. Human love was but a fetter; human beauty a dangerous deception. Some of the meditations enjoined by early Buddhism, and assigned to Gautama himself, were meditations in a cemetery or charnel house. There in the putrid flesh of decaying corpses a man may see the foulness of his body. The monk is bidden to remember the disgusting elements of which his body is composed.

'The body, loathsome and unclean,
Is carrion-like resembling dung,
Despised by those whose eyes can see,
Though fools find in it their delight.

This monstrous wound hath outlets nine,
A damp, wet skin doth clothe it o'er;
At every point the filthy thing
Exudeth nasty, stinking smells.'[1]

[1] *W.B.T.* p. 300.

An ancient story speaks of a lovely woman, beautifully dressed, who, as she was fleeing from her husband, with whom she had quarrelled, passed a monk, and, as she passed, laughed loudly. The monk looked at her, and 'seeing her teeth, realized the impurity of the body, and attained to saintship.' When her husband arrived, he asked the monk if he had seen a woman pass that way. The monk replied :

'Was it a woman or a man
That passed this way? I cannot tell.
But this I know, a set of bones
Is travelling on upon this road.'[1]

Life is sorrow : escape from it is the supreme good, and escape is possible only for the monk who has renounced all worldly ties. The best that the layman could do was so to act that his next birth on earth might be good and honourable and in circumstances in which he might be able himself to win deliverance.

As Gautama rejected the doctrine of the soul, it seems strange that he should yet assume the truth of *karma* and transmigration. How can there be rebirth if there is no soul to be reborn? Yet, in spite of the denial of a soul, no heresy is more strongly condemned than that of those who taught absolute annihilation at death, so that men would not experience in future lives the effects of the deeds which they had done. But, although early Buddhism taught that there was no soul to be reborn, it yet assumed a connexion between this life and the next, and the Buddha seems to admit 'a continuity of conscious-

[1] *op. cit.* p. 297 f.

ness.'[1] As Prof. de la Vallée Poussin puts it, although early Buddhism does not recognize the existence of a soul or self as 'a metaphysical entity,' it recognises, 'in its stead, a continuous fluid complex, both bodily and mental, a person, which, in fact, possesses nearly all the characters of a soul as we understand the word.' 'But this person is not a substance and it is therefore capable of dissolution. This dissolution is "deliverance" or *Nirvāna*.'[2]

It may well be owing to his sense of life's futility that the Buddha refused to give to *Nirvāna* a positive meaning. Resolutely he refused to say whether the saint would or would not exist after death. To some Western scholars it has seemed impossible that Gautama should have spoken as if release may involve annihilation. But we have to remember that faith in a future life, unless it be due to the natural instinct of self-preservation, is an expression of our estimate of the life which we now live. And to Gautama this life was sorrow, and thus release from it the greatest good. But, although his position seems logically to involve annihilation, it was not annihilation he proclaimed, but the ineffable bliss of *Nirvāna*. Though *Nirvāna* could not be defined, it yet was the highest good. *Nirvāna* meant 'peace' and 'freedom'; it is 'the coolness that allures the pilgrim of a world in flames'; it is 'a refuge from the fleeting show of things'; it is 'the destruction of craving and of sorrow.'[3]

[1] Keith *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 80.
[2] *The Way to Nirvāna*, pp. 55 f.
[3] Saunders *Epochs in Buddhist History*, p. 17, where a full list of the Pāli terms used to describe *Nirvāna* is given.

We have only to turn to the *Dhammapada* or *The Psalms of the Early Buddhists* to realize how great was the joy which *Nirvāna* brought to some.

With the rise of the Mahāyāna, there arose a decisive change in the estimate of life's meaning, and so of life's permanence. The way of salvation was no longer restricted to the monk, and the goal of final release was indefinitely postponed. In the ' full ' Mahāyāna, the ultimate reality was indeed, held to be ' emptiness.' But that judgment of orthodox Mahāyāna philosophy had little influence on popular religion. The Buddhas and the *Bodhisattvas* were worshipped as if they were real, and the ideal now set before the Buddhist was to become in the end a Buddha. But only after innumerable ages would that ideal be realized. As the *Lotus of the Good Law* declares, Sākyamuni ' does not teach a particular *Nirvāna* for each being; he calls all beings to reach complete *Nirvāna* by means of the complete *Nirvāna* of the Tathāgata.'[1] The Buddhist has thus no immediate interest in release. His aim it is through an immensity of years ' to keep the true law of innumerable and incalculable Lords and Buddhas in future, promote the interest of innumerable and incalculable beings, and bring innumerable and incalculable beings to full ripeness of supreme and perfect enlightenment'[2]

Heavens and hells have here a new importance for Buddhism no longer has as its chief concern

[1] *Saddharma-Pandarika* III. (*S.B.E.* xxi. p. 81.) The Tathāgata ' the one who has arrived ' at redemption, is Gautama's frequent description of himself.

[2] *op. cit.* viii. p. 193. The words quoted from part of the promise made to Pūrna.

the shattering of the cycle of rebirth. Gautama, according to the Pāli texts, retained the conventional ideas of heavens and hells, but they had for him little interest. These now become a striking feature of Buddhist teaching. Thus, in China it has been by its vivid presentation of gorgeous heavens and appropriate and terrifying hells that Buddhism has made its chief popular appeal.

In the simple Mahāyāna of the 'Paradise' Scriptures, the impermanence of life is ignored, and the ultimate goal is not release from life, or even Buddhahood, but full and happy life with Amitābha in his splendid heaven. As we have seen,[1] it is this form of Buddhism which has to-day in Japan the greatest influence. It is a Buddhism in which even the priests may marry, and in which activity is not shunned but prized. Salvation comes through faith in Amida, and that salvation will be consummated at death when the devout will go to be with Amida in endless bliss.

### In Zoroastrianism.

Hinduism and Buddhism have for the most part regarded this present life as evil and seen in redemption from life the highest goal which the future can afford. Zoroastrianism and early Islām, seeing in this life a sphere in which God's will can be obeyed, have looked forward to life's continuance. For the good there is the certainty of heaven; for the bad, the certainty of hell.

Zoroaster in his estimate of the present life reflects his faith in a righteous God. Devotion

[1] See earlier pp. 128 f.

to God was to be shown not in seclusion, quietism, or asceticism, but in active service in God's cause. His message for the present was in close relation to his expectations of the future. 'Whoso cometh to the righteous one, far from him shall be the future long age of misery, of darkness, ill-food and crying of Woe. To such an existence, ye liars, shall your own Self bring you by your actions.'[1]

Zoroaster was sustained in his work by the confidence that in the life to come his work would meet with its reward. This world is connected with the next by the Bridge of Separation. It is at this bridge that the difference between the good and the evil shall be revealed. The soul of the Liar shall tremble at the Revelation on the Bridge of the Separator,'[2] but Zoroaster will himself accompany across 'the Bridge of the Separator' those whom he has impelled to the adoration of Mazdāh Ahura.[3]

It would seem that, unlike his later followers, Zoroaster conceived the punishment of the wicked to be permanent. 'In immortality shall the souls of the righteous be joyful, in perpetuity shall be the torment of the Liars.'[4] The act of judgment is assigned sometimes to Ahura Mazdāh; sometimes to Sraosha, the Angel of Judgment. Apparently Zoroaster recognized that some would be not good enough for heaven, not bad enough for hell. The Judge shall act 'with most just deed towards the men of the Lie and the man of the Right, and him whose

[1] *Ys.* xxxi. 20.
[2] *Ys.* xlvi. 10.
[3] *Ys.* li. 13.
[4] *Ys.* xlv. 7.

false things and good things balance.'[1] 'Whoso, O Mazdāh, makes his thoughts now better, now worse, and likewise his Self by action and by word, and follows his own inclinations, wishes and choices, he shall in thy purpose be in a separate place at the last.'[2]

Life for Zoroaster was thus the scene of a great conflict with tremendous issues. The final triumph of good can be hastened by the obedience of the faithful. By his work Zoroaster was hastening the consummation 'when Good Thought shall establish the Dominion' and he prayed for himself and for his followers that they may 'be those that make this world advance.'[3]

Much as the later *Avestā* departed from the simple teaching of Zoroaster, it yet preserved his freedom from ascetic influences. 'The man who has a wife is far above him who begets no sons; he who keeps a house is far above him who has none; he who has children is far above the childless man; he who has riches is far above him who has none. And of two men, he who fills himself with meat is filled with the good spirit much more than he who does not do so; the latter is all but dead.' It is the well-fed man who fights best against death.[4] The man who increases the world's food is doing a service for God. 'He who sows corn, sows holiness;

[1] *Ys.* xxxi, 1. [2] *Ys.* xlviii. 4. [3] *Ys.* xxx. 8 f.

[4] *Vdd.* iv. 47-50. So in the Pahlavi book *Sad Dar*, xviii. 8, it is taught that the first question which the archangels ask the soul at the Bridge is this, 'Hast thou brought thy own substitute visibly into the world or not? When he has not brought it, they will pass over him, and his soul will remain in that place, full of anguish and grief.' Hence when a man is childless, he must adopt a son. (*S.B.E.* xxiv. pp. 278 ff.)

he makes the law of Mazdāh grow higher and higher.' His act is worth 'a hundred acts of adoration, a thousand oblations, ten thousand sacrifices.' The demons fear and tremble when barley grows. 'It is as though red-hot iron were being poured down their throats when there is plenty of corn.'[1] Life was still regarded as a conflict in which each man must take his part, even although that conflict was now conceived less as a conflict between good and evil than between the clean and the unclean.

The life to come is now depicted with more vivid detail.[2] For three nights after death, the soul of the faithful remains at the head of the discarded body. On each of these three nights 'his soul tastes as much of pleasure as the whole of the living world can taste,' and sings Ahura Mazdāh's praises. His conscience (*daenā*) then appears to him 'in the shape of a maiden fair, bright, white-armed, strong, tall-formed, high-standing, thick-breasted, beautiful of body, noble, of a glorious seed, of the size of a maid in her fifteenth year, as fair as the fairest thing in the world.' The soul of the faithful advances by three steps into the Paradises of 'Good-Thought,' 'Good-Word' and 'Good-Deed' and at the fourth step he reaches 'the Endless Lights.' And the soul is given the food 'of good thoughts, of good words, of good deeds, of good religion.'

When a wicked man perishes, his soul 'rushes and sits near the skull' and on each of three

[1] *Vdd.* iii. 31 .

[2] The relevant texts are conveniently given in *The Zoroastrian Doctrine of the Future Life*, by Jal Dastur C. Pavry.

nights, 'tastes as much of suffering as the whole of the living world can taste.'[1] In three steps the soul proceeds through the hells of 'Evil Thought,' 'Evil-Word' and 'Evil-Deed,' and with a fourth step enters into 'the Endless Darkness,' and partakes food 'of poison and poisonous stench,' the food 'of evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds, evil religion.'[2]

In another part of the *Avestā* it is taught that the conscience of the faithful escorts the soul over the Bridge of the Separator.[3] It is not stated whether the wicked also cross over the Bridge, but as in one passage we read that whoso kills 'the dog with the prickly back' shall not find a way over the Bridge[4] it would appear that the *Avestā* accepts the doctrine elaborated in the later Pahlavi books that good and evil alike cross over the Bridge. For the righteous, the bridge becomes a broad bridge, 'as much as the height of nine spears'; for the wicked, it becomes narrow, 'even unto a resemblance to the edge of a razor.' The righteous thus pass over safely; the wicked 'falls from the middle of the bridge' into the abyss of hell.[5]

Zoroaster was content to leave undefined the bliss of the faithful and the torment of the wicked. The Pahlavi books filling in the outline given by the later *Avestā* speak with picturesque details of

[1] The *Yasht* from which our quotations are taken makes no mention of his conscience appearing to him. In the Pahlavi Apocalypse, the *Ardā Virāf*, xvii, she appears as a profligate woman, 'naked, decayed . . . most filthy and most stinking.'

[2] *Yt.* xxii. 1-36.

[3] *Vdd.* xix. 30.

[4] *Vdd.* xiii. 2. The hedgehog is here referred to.

[5] *Dādistān-ī-Dīnīk* xxi. 5. (*S.B.E.* xviii. pp. 48 f.)

the heavens and hells. Thus in the *Ardā Virāf*, we have full and vivid descriptions of the appropriate rewards in heaven for good deeds[1] and of the dreadful and apt torments which beset in hell every type of evil-doer.[2]

Zoroaster had looked for the swift appearance of the consummation which he hoped to hasten by his labours. The Pahlavi books, developing the teaching of the late *Avestā*[3], speak of three Saviours,[4] born from the miraculously preserved seed of Zoroaster, who shall each inaugurate a millennium. Greatest of them all is the last, who shall bring about the Renovation of the world. All the dead will be raised to receive their final judgment. The righteous shall be separated from the wicked. For three days and nights the righteous shall enjoy the bliss of heaven ; the wicked, bodily torments in hell. Then shall flow a flood of molten metal into which all men must pass to be purified. ' When one is righteous, then it seems to him just as though he walks continually in warm milk ; but when wicked, then it seems to him in such manner as though, in the world, he walks continually in melted metal.' The whole human race shall then be restored to obedience to God. ' All men become of one voice and administer loud praise ' to Ahura Mazdāh and the archangels. Families will then be re-united. Every man shall receive again his wife and children ; ' so they act as now in the world, but there is no begetting of children.'

[1] *Ardā Virāf* vii-xv.
[2] *op. cit.* xvi-c.
[3] cp. *Yt.* xiii. 62 and 142.
[4] Hoshedar, Hoshedar-mah and Soshyos .

At length all the devils are slain. Hell itself shall be no more, for Ahura Mazdāh 'brings the land of hell back for the enlargement of the world; the renovation arises in the universe by his will, and the world is immortal for ever and everlasting.'[1]

In Islām

Muhammad in his estimate of life spoke as the vigorous Arab who succeeded in making himself the chieftain of his people. God's favour was to be seen in present prosperity, and would secure for the faithful abundant blessings in the life to come.

It was with the proclamation of the Last Things that Muhammad began his work. Some modern scholars, believing that from the first Muhammad aimed at secular power, have supposed that he used the hope of heaven and the fear of hell as a convenient means of securing this end. But there seems no reason to deny Muhammad's own belief in the promises and threats which he proclaimed. Like many a revivalist preacher in Christianity, he found that his vivid presentation of heaven and hell was an effective means of impressing those that listened to him. But his preaching would have been less impressive had he not himself believed the message he proclaimed. He himself was surely one of those 'who own the judgment-day a truth,' and 'thrill with dread at the chastisement of their Lord.'[2] The day would come 'when there shall be a blast on the trumpet,'

[1] *Būndahishn* xxx 12-32. (*S.B.E.* v. pp. 124-9.)
[2] *S.* lxx. 26 f.

'And the heaven shall be opened and be full of portals,
And the mountains shall be set in motion, and melt into thin vapour.
Hell truly shall be a place of snares,
The home of transgressors,
To abide therein ages;
No coolness shall they taste therein nor any drink,
Save boiling water and running sores;
Meet recompense!'[1]

God has ready for the wicked

'strong fetters and a flaming fire,
And food that choketh, and a sore torment.'[2]

As a later *Sūrah* says,

'for the evil doers is a wretched home—
Hell—wherein they shall be burned; how wretched a bed!
Even so. Let them then taste it—boiling water and gore,
And other things of kindred sort!'[3]

On that day it will be useless to make to God excuses:

'He shall say, "Wrangle not in my presence. I had plied you beforehand with menaces:
My doom changeth not, and I am not unjust to man."
On that day will we cry to Hell, "Art thou full?"
And it shall say, "Are there more?"'[4]

The joys of heaven are as sensuously conceived as are the pangs of hell. The faithful shall be rewarded with Paradise and silken robes

[1] *S.* lxxviii. 18-26.
[2] *S.* xxxviii. 55-8.
[3] *S.* lxxii. 12 f.
[4] *S.* l. 57 ff.

'Reclining therein on bridal couches, naught shall they know of sun or piercing cold.'[1]

They shall live 'in gardens of delight.'

'Aye-blooming youths go round about to them
With goblets and ewers and a cup of flowing wine;
Their brows ache not from it, nor fails the sense:
And with such fruits as shall please them best,
And with flesh of such birds, as they shall long for:
And theirs shall be the Houris, with large dark eyes,
Like pearls hidden in their shells.

Of a rare creation have we created the Houris,
And we have made them ever virgins,
Dear to their spouses, of equal age with them.'[2]

Although Muhammad thus conceived of heaven and hell through sensuous images, at the beginning of his mission his preaching had in it a world-denying note. Those who 'love riches with exceeding love' will lament when hell is 'moved up' that they had not prepared themselves for the life to come.[3] Later, in the days of his success, Muhammad grew accustomed to prosperity. Not world-denial, but world-conquest, became the dominant attitude of Islām. After his death, when the Muslims overran the rich lands of the Eastern Empire, their leaders acquired great wealth and lived in a luxury strange to the simple habits of the founder of their faith.

Muhammad was a much married man, and the

[1] *S.* lxxvii. 12 f. [2] *S.* lvi. 17-22, 34ff. [3] *S.* lxxxix. 21 ff.

traditions assign to him strong condemnations of monasticism. 'Our custom is the married life.' 'There is no monkery in Islām. Our monkery is the holy war (*jihād*).'[1] But the growth of wealth led to a reaction. Some of the devout were impressed with the Christian monks, with their garments of rough wool (*sūf*) and it was as an ascetic movement that Sūfism began. But with them asceticism was not an end in itself. It was a means by which to reach a state of unity with God. Since they thought of God not with fear but love, the hope of heaven and the dread of hell lost for some of these Sūfīs their meaning. Thus Rābia, a woman mystic, exclaimed,

> 'O God, if I worship Thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty!'[2]

The great Sūfī Jīlī taught that of the eight Paradises 'the four highest' 'have no trees, pavilions or houris, and are inhabited (except the highest of all) by contemplatives and saints in an ascending scale of holiness. The floor of the eighth Paradise is the roof of the Throne of God. Thither none may come—for it is the Paradise of the Essence, " the Lauded Station " which, as the Tradition tells us, was promised by God to Muhammad.' Hell, like heaven, is by him spiritually conceived. It is 'the manifestation of Divine Majesty,' and with its pains are com-

[1] Goldziher *Vorlesungen über den Islām*, p. 145.
[2] R. A. Nicholson *The Mystics of Islām*, p. 115.

mingled joys. Hell is only a 'temporary state.' In the end hell shall pass away and mercy will prevail.[1]

The expectation of heaven and hell has remained vivid in Islām. Especially has the hope of heaven inspired men to die bravely in the *jihād*, the Sacred War. The growing belief in the intercession of Muhammad at the Last Day has deprived many Muslims of its terror. In spite of Muhammad's clear warnings, there is the general expectation that he will secure the entrance of his people as a whole into Paradise. 'Only a single wretched man will be left outside to satisfy God's justice and keep the letter of His threats.'[2] The stern vigour of Muhammad's teaching is thus ignored. To be a Muslim will suffice to win safety at the Last Day.

### In Christianity.

We have seen how differently the two great types of religion judge of life's meaning and value. In Zoroastrianism and early Islām, life in this world is prized, and since God is regarded as a Law-giver, prosperity is held to be the sign of His favour. Obedience to His will will secure blessings in this life, and greater blessings in the life to come. In certain phases of Hinduism, and in early Buddhism, life is regarded as an evil. Good deeds may, indeed, secure good 'births,' but the one perfect good is escape from life. Here, too, Christianity differs from each of these two religious types, and yet recog-

[1] Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 136 f.
[2] D. B. Macdonald in *The Vital Forces of Christianity and Islām*, p. 233.

nises, and may meet, the needs which these two types express.

In our Lord's estimate of life's meaning and life's permanence, we can once more discern the decisive influence of His faith in God. He lived at a time when many Jews, despairing of the present world-order, looked forward to the coming of a new age when God would vindicate His people's faith by destroying the enemies that oppressed them. Our Lord expressed His message in the terms of this apocalyptic expectation. But for Him the 'new age' was not merely future. Its powers could be already realised, and His own works of healing were a clear proof of its presence among men. Already men might trust in God with a childlike faith, and live in the world like children in their Father's home. God's goodness could everywhere be seen. He sends His sun and rain to all alike. He clothes the flowers in their splendour. He notes the sparrow's fall. So Jesus moved among men, not as a gloomy fanatic, but as one interested in the simple sights of the countryside and in the homely events of ordinary village life. Life was not in itself an evil. Yet life's natural joys were of subordinate importance in comparison with the supreme demands of God's Kingdom. The Kingdom was a treasure surpassing all earthly goods. To secure this greatest good, lesser goods had, if necessary, to be sacrificed.

Where, as in early Buddhism, life is regarded as an ill, the marriage state is naturally condemned and full deliverance is offered only to those who have renounced all ties of family.

Our Lord warned His disciples that, at that time of peril, some of them would have to be unmarried for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, but, as we have seen, nowhere does He suggest that in itself the married life was a lapse from perfect purity. It was by God's ordinance that man and wife were 'one flesh,' and in the readiness of parents to give good gifts to their children He saw the reflection of the heavenly Father's love. Duties inherent in the family relationship were not to be evaded. Children must support their parents in their need. In the child's natural trustfulness He saw the pattern for the disciples' faith. He recognised life's simple needs and bade men pray for bread for the ensuing day. Early Buddhism bade men see in human beauty a snare, and enjoined contemplations on the loathsomeness of the body. Jesus saved men, not from sin alone, but from disease. Yet the spiritual had pre-eminence. God must be obeyed even though obedience involve family estrangements. Allegiance to Himself and to His cause had to come even before love to parents or to wife. His estimate of life was thus dependent on His faith in God. Men could be God's children, and to do the Father's will was the first of all human duties.

Retribution Christ recognised. Acts go on to their effects. God was to be feared and God alone. It was better to enter the Kingdom maimed than not to enter it at all. Yet retribution was not regarded as a final principle of God's working, or as a sufficient explanation of life's sorrows. Those killed by sudden accident, or

through men's cruelty, did not suffer because of their exceptional sinfulness.[1] And suffering could itself become a part of service. Men might be persecuted and reviled for righteousness' sake. Those who thus suffered were not accursed but blessed. The Son of Man Himself had come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister ; to give His life for the ransom of the many.

Though the earthly life of Jesus ended on the Cross, it is a misrepresentation of Him to depict Him, as much later Christian thought has done, as the sad and emaciated Man of Sorrows. He rejoiced in the Father's love. He knew Himself adequate to every human need, for the God whom He revealed was a God of grace, ready to forgive men their sins, and caring for them in all their individual difficulties. No experience of men's cruelty could destroy His faith in God. Even in Gethsemane and on the Cross He called God ' Father.' He summoned men to share in His own triumphant faith in God. Great as was the cost of His service at that time of crisis, He spoke of His message as a Gospel. Life lived as He would have men live was a life already blessed.

Such a faith led inevitably not to love alone, but hope. Faith shows itself in love now and reaches out to a hope beyond the grave. There is a difference here between our Lord's preaching on the life to come and that of Zoroaster or Muhammad. He did not summon men to the good life by the promise of heaven and the threat of hell. The blessings of the Kingdom—trust

[1] cp. Luke xiii. 1-5.

in God and obedient service to Him—could already be enjoyed, and they were blessings which death could not destroy. These blessings were not material but spiritual ; in heaven there was neither marrying nor giving in marriage. The hope of heaven was sure. The present experience of God's grace and the hope of the future enjoyment of it were inseparably connected. God, the God whom He proclaimed and knew, was not the God of the dead but of the living. He is not a God who receiving us into communion with Him will allow that communion to end at death.[1] Faith in God thus involves the hope that communion with Him is eternal.

In later Christian thought, we find, not only sensuous presentations of heaven and hell, but an otherworldliness which denies to this present life worth and meaning. These are aberrations from Christ's teaching, and from the classic interpretation of the Epistles. Thus for St. Paul the knowledge of God in Christ meant adoption into sonship with God, life in Christ, and the possession of the Spirit. He felt himself liberated from every spiritual tyranny. The powers of the eternal realm had broken through. Salvation was for him at once present and future. The eternal had become in part present for its content was given to him in Christ. Yet it remained future, and he looked with confidence for the perfect consummation of his communion with God in Christ. Neither life nor death would be able to separate him from the love of

[1] Mark xii. 27.

God in Christ. And the hope of the future, so far from emptying the present of its meaning, gave him strength to do his daily task. Behind the seen and the transitory was the unseen and the eternal to which he looked. There right triumphed, and that gave him courage to face his difficulties. If death came it mattered not, for he would be with Christ which was better far. If in this life only he had hoped in Christ, he would have been of all men most pitiable, for his life would have been based upon a lie. Instead, he knew that the meaning of the eternal sphere was given him in Christ. So he could be of good courage. By his own afflictions, he was fulfilling the work of Christ. Even in prison he could bid his converts rejoice, and could himself show that joy and peace which belong to those who experience in part a communion with God which they know to be eternal.

In the Johannine writings we find similar teaching, although expressed in different terms. Eternal life is present as well as future. God in His love has given to men His Son that they may not perish but have eternal life. Eternal life belongs to him who knows God and Him whom God has sent. It is a life which has love for the brethren for its outward sign. This eternal life will reach in heaven its fulfilment. In the Father's house are many resting places. Meanwhile we may have the guidance of the Spirit, and the confidence of the Father's love.

Some later Christian writers indulge in descriptions of the torments of the lost as detailed and as lurid as any to be found in non-Christian

scriptures. But the prime documents of the Christian faith speak little of the lost. In them, retribution is, indeed, asserted, but God's love is supreme. Whether any will be lost at the end we do not know. But this we know : God is one who, like the shepherd and the woman in Christ's parables, seeks the lost ' until he find it.' With St. Paul, Christian faith looks forward to the time when God will be ' all in all.' It is enough for us to know that the God of eternity is the God whose holy love we have seen in Christ. Already there is open to us a communion with God which is eternal. Thus the future does not rob the present of its meaning. In time eternal life may be experienced ; in eternity it will be consummated. The Christian message is not concerned primarily with the future life. Its confidence about the future is derived from the revelation of God in Christ, and from the present experience of a communion with God which time cannot destroy.

# VII

# THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

Our task is done. In the brief limits of our space we have sought to review the answers given by the Living Religions of the East to the great problems of God's nature and manifestation, and of man's redemption, duty and destiny.

To one who judges by Christian values, the solution of Christianity seems to have a unity and simplicity lacking in other religions. God is revealed in Jesus Christ, through whom we know God's holy love, and are brought into a relationship of sonship. In this way our needs are met. We are assured of God's forgiveness, and delivered from fear, and from the sense of the futility of life. Even pain loses its bitterness. As Christ died upon the Cross, suffering cannot be regarded as a curse. It may be so borne as to become part of our Christian service. This revelation of God in Christ gives to the moral ideal its content and sanction, and leads to an estimate of life's meaning from which there arises the hope that the communion with God begun on earth will reach its fulfilment in the life beyond the grave.

Much has been said about the 'problem' of Christianity. As we remember the aspirations of the great religions, and the insecurity of the beliefs in which these aspirations have found

expression, the Christian Gospel appears not so much as a 'problem,' but as the solution of our deepest problems, and an answer to the quest of the saints and seers, not of Christendom only, but of the non-Christian world.

We cannot solve by reasoning the question of the relation of Christianity to the Living Religions of the East, nor can we prove the finality of Christianity. Yet from a comparison of the data, we may gain a confirmation of the Christian faith in the sufficiency of the Christian message. But we make that faith meaningless, if we speak as if Christianity were the monopoly of the West. It is a faith which, if real, must lead to the attempt to secure in fact the universality of the Christian religion. And so our comparison of Christianity with other religions is an inevitable reminder of that missionary enterprise in which the Church's faith in the universality of the Gospel is at once expressed and tested.

In any of its empirical forms, Christianity is obviously not universal nor final, but limited by its age and place. As Dr. Temple put it, 'I am, as I hope, a Christian Englishman, but then I am only an English Christian, and my character is moulded not only by the spirit of Christ, but by the spirit of contemporary England which are not the same.'[1] Western Christianity bears the impress of Western culture. Our interpretations of Christianity are local and transient, and are due in part to the influence of our heritage and environment. We cannot claim for them final

[1] *Foundations*, 1914 imp., pp. 335 f.

and universal value. Our 'unhappy divisions' have here their use. They may serve to remind us of the incompleteness of our experience of the Gospel, and should save us from the attempt to impose upon the East forms of Christianity which are Western in their outlook and interest.

It is this connexion of Christianity with the West which is to many in the East its prime offence. The acceptance of Christianity by non-Christians has always been hindered by racial pride. Thus at the first the claim that 'salvation is of the Jews' must have seemed to many a wanton absurdity. As Mr. Edwyn Bevan has said, 'For all peoples a genuine entrance into the Christian society means some painful sacrifice of pride, and we cannot make the narrow gate a wide one. Indians see plainly enough what a sacrifice of pride Englishmen have to make if they are going to be genuinely Christian, adopting the attitude of humble service instead of standing on their superior power. But Indians also have to make a great sacrifice of pride if they are going really to bow to the Hebrew Jesus as the supreme Lord.'[1] What Mr. Bevan says of Indians applies to all who like them are proud of their ancient heritage. But if the offence came only from the Jewish origin of Christianity, it would not be so acutely realised. St. Paul encountered opposition in his work because he preached a Jewish Messiah, and belonged himself to the despised Jewish people. The missionary to the East to-day is more gravely hindered, for he does

[1] *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems*, p. 436.

not come as a member of a subject nation ; he is the representative of a dominant civilisation, which repels, even more than it attracts, and which seems to many in the East the enemy of all that they most deeply prize.

Although Christianity cannot be accepted by Eastern peoples without the surrender of racial pride, we have no right to make their acceptance more difficult by our own racial pride. The missionary enterprise in the past has used too much the metaphors of warfare, and its representatives have in consequence at times appeared not as the messengers of a Gospel, but as those engaged in a task of subjugation. If we offer Christianity to the East as the religion of the West, we shall offer it in vain. Our interpretation of Christianity may be Western, but Christianity is not a Western religion. Eastern in origin, it is to-day the religion not of the West, but of some in the West, and some in the East. It is to be preached, not as the religion of the West, but as a religion for the world, whose full meaning will not be realised until its universality ceases to be a mere postulate of faith, and becomes an achievement of service.

For many educated men in the East to-day, the issue is becoming less the issue between Christianity and non-Christian religions than between Christianity and religious scepticism or indifference. As we have seen, there has been in recent years a notable transformation of the religions of the East, and already they owe to Christianity much of this apparent revival of vitality. To Christianity is largely due the

present re-valuation of their ancient heritage so that, for instance, in India the noble Krishna of the *Gītā* is taking the place of the lewd Krishna of the *Purānas* ; in Buddhism there has been a return to the exalted teaching of the Buddha ; in Islām there is to be seen the progressive idealisation of Muhammad and the attempt to approximate Muslim to Christian ethics. But from the West has come to the East not only Christianity, but modern scholarship and science and it is doubtful if these purified religions can long resist their corroding influence. The Christian faith that God has been revealed in time gives to history its due importance, and it is in Christian lands that methods of historical study have reached their greatest precision. Christianity as connected with a historic person owes much to the historical criticism which has sifted the essential from the unessential. The same methods of criticism must in the end destroy faith in all mythic gods. The legends of Krishna and Siva will not stand the test of fact, and, at first, the application of historical criticism to their study is likely to bring more loss than gain. Around these mythic gods has gathered as we have seen, a rich devotion. It will be loss, indeed, if that devotion can find no object on which to centre. Better far to be a Tukārām praying to Krishna at Vithobā, than one left without a god to worship.

Everywhere in the East is felt the influence of Western science. It is not an accident that science has reached its fullest development in lands where Christianity has taught respect for

facts. But the discoveries of science, like the methods of historical criticism, are destructive of any religion which is not consonant with attested fact. And the advance of science results in an immense development of material resources. This development, rightly used, can lead to the diminution of poverty and the raising of the standard of health and comfort. But it is also leading in the East to an industrialism as ruthless as that of the beginnings in the West of the industrial age. It is not surprising that many in the East look back regretfully on the old simplicities. The advance of science is not to be stayed by such pathetic protests as Mr. Gandhi's spinning wheel. But the impact of the West upon the East will be not gain but loss, if it result in the destruction of ancient faiths, and the substitution of a hard materialism for which wealth and power appear the only objects worth attaining.

The Christian task in East and West is becoming more and more the same. The real alternative to Christianity is not another religion. It is irreligion—the acceptance of values which ignore the spiritual, and which see in material things the sole realities. The present contact of West and East thus not only gives to the missionary enterprise an immense importance. It is a sharp reminder to us Western Christians of the necessity of judging life by Christian standards. It is useless to seek to propagate Christianity in the East, if our practical decisions are determined by values derived from that materialism which is now the enemy not of

Christianity only, but of the Living Religions of the East. It is useless to speak of Christianity as a world-religion, if at the same time, in contradiction to the Christian estimate of man, we speak of 'inferior' races, fit only for subjugation and exploitation.

'Religion,' says Dr. Whitehead, 'is tending to degenerate into a decent formula, wherewith to embellish a comfortable life.'[1] Such a religion, even though it be called Christian, can never be universal in its meaning. No 'decent formula' can meet the religious aspirations of the race. No 'embellishment of life' can be adequate for the Church's present task.

The missionary enterprise is not the imposition of an alien civilisation. It is an attempt to share with others what we feel to be the best we know and have, the revelation of God in Christ. The missionary who understands his task goes not to impoverish but to enrich. It is not for him to condemn or criticise. He has one aim alone: to try to make real to others the Good News of God in Jesus Christ, to present to the East the Christ whom the West imperfectly obeys.

Thus the problem of the relation of Christianity to the Living Religions of the East drives us back to the re-exploration of the meaning and resources of the Christian Gospel. The Christian Message is either true or false. But if true, it is adequate. For, if it be true, then we have in Christ the perfect revelation of the holy love of God. He is all men's Lord, and the wisdom of Eastern seers and the devotion of Eastern saints

[1] *Science and the Modern World*, p. 233.

may find in Him their satisfaction. So great a Gospel can be believed only as it is in part obeyed, and the confidence in the sufficiency of Christ to meet all men's needs can be won and kept only as we really trust the revelation of God in Him, and, through the constraining of His love, seek to pass on to others what we know to be our own best possession.

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# INDEX


Abdul-Rahīm, 134
Ādityas, 38
Agni, 37 ff, 148
Ahmadīya Movement, 21
Ahraman, 57. See Angra Mainyu
Ahura Mazdāh, 54-7, 94 ff., 163, 193 ff.
Allāh, 58 ff.
Ameer Alī, 21, 169, 175
Amesha Spenta, 55
Amida, 52. See Amitābha
Amidaism, 52, 93 f., 163, 192
Amitābha, 52, 93 f., 128 f., 163, 192
*Analects*, 36, 145 f.
Ancestor Worship, 36, 77, 113, 147, 178
Andræ, 98, 134, 169
Angra Mainyu, 57
*Arhat*, 159
Ārya-Samāj, 20
Athanasius, 135
Ātmān, 40-8, 116 ff.
Avalokitesvara, 93
*Avatār*, 79 f., 102
*Avestā*, 55 f., 95, 130, 164, 194 ff.

Bell, 59
Bevan, 211
*Bhagavadgītā*, 20, 43 f., 77 ff., 118, 152 ff., 185
*Bhakti*, 77 f., 81 ff.
Bhandarkar, 81
Bishr-i-Yāsīn, 133
*Bodhisattva*, 91, 127, 159 f.
Boniface viii., 15
Bouquet, 27
Brahman, 40-8, 116 ff.
*Brāhmanas*, 39 f., 149 f., 180 f.
Brāhma-Samāj, 18, 20
Buddha, 40, 48-53, 89-94, 121-9, 155-8, 188 ff.

Cairns, 138
Caliphate, 21
Confucius, 36, 76 f., 113, 145 f.
Cooraswamy, 24
Crusades, 15

Decrees, 60 ff.
De Groot, 113, 147, 161 f.
Deism, 16, 96
Dependent Origination, 49, 124
Deussen, 41, 150
Dhalla, 57 f., 95 f., 165
*Dhammapada*, 127, 158
Dubois, 80
Duff, 22
Durgā, 88

Evangelical Revival, 17 f.
Eightfold Path, 123
'Fire-Worship,' 96
*Fravashis*, 56

Gandhi, 22, 24, 155
*Gāthās*, 18, 21, 54-7, 94 f., 163 f., 193 f.
Gautama, 40. See Buddha
al-Ghazzālī, 63 ff.
Goldziher, 62, 101, 201
Griswold, 38, 179
Grube, 35, 76
Grützmacher, 30
Guillaume, 98, 167 f.

Haas, 128
*Hadīth*, 97 f., 167 f.
al-Hallāj, 62 f.
Harada, 128
Hegelianism, 25
Heiler, 23
Heim, 109
Herrmann, 26
Honen, 128
Hopkins, 151
Hoshedar, 197
Hoshedar-mah, 197
Hume, 17

Ihmels, 30 f.
Illumination Movement, 16

Jalāluddīn, 63, 133, 169
Jesus Christ, Teaching of, 30 ff., 67, 103 f., 135-9, 170 ff., 202-6
— in *Qurān*, 97
*Jihād*, 166, 201 f.
Jīlī, 201
Jones, 120

Kaftan, 27
Kālī, 88
Kant, 17
*Karma*, 40-7, 115, 186, 189 f.
Keith, 41, 92, 149, 159, 179, 190
Kennedy, 81
Krishna, 20, 78-82, 119 f., 152 f., 154, 213
Kuan-yin, 76, 161 f.

Legge, 35, 147
*Lotus of the Good Law*, 51 f., 93, 191
Lull, 15
Luther, 84

Macdonald, 65, 134
Macdonell, 38
*Mahābhārata*, 154
Mahāyāna, 51 ff., 92 ff., 127 ff., 147, 160-3, 191 ff.
Mānikka Vāsagar, 85 ff., 119 f., 154, 185
Mencius, 36, 113, 146
Morgan, 67
Moulton, 95
Mozoomdar, 18 f.
Muhammad, 58-65, 96-101, 132 ff., 175, 198 ff., 213

Nallasvāmī Pillai, 85
Nestorian Missions, 14
Nicholson, 63, 99, 133 f., 201
*Nirvāna*, 48 f., 121 f., 125 ff., 159, 190
Noble Truths, 122-7

Oldenberg, 41
Otto, 50
Ormazd, 55. See Ahura Mazdāh

Paul, St., Teaching of, 69 f., 105 f., 139-42, 173 f., 206 f.
Pavry, 195
Poussin, 49, 92, 190
Prārthanā-Samāj, 20, 186

*Psalms of Early Buddhists*, 127
*Purānas*, 20

*Qurān*, 59-62, 96 f., 131 f., 165 ff., 175

Rābia, 201
Rādhā, 81
Rāhula, 157
Rāma, 79, 83
Rāmānuja, 46, 83, 154
Rāmāyana, 47, 83
Rām Mohan Rai, 80
Rāmprasād Sen, 88, 186
Reischauer, 129
*Rigveda*, 37 ff., 114 f., 148 f., 179 f.
Ritschl, 26

Saiva-Siddhānta, 47, 85
Sākyamuni, 51. See Buddha
Sankara, 40, 44 ff., 78, 118 f., 183
Sarkar, 89
Saunders, 129, 190
Savitar, 38
Schleiermacher, 25
Sell, 62
Shang-ti, 35 f., 112
Shinran, 129
Shintō, 21
Siva, 84-7, 185
Sleigh, 27
Söderblom, 35, 50
Soma, 37
Soshyos, 197
Southill, 15
Sraosha, 193
Sūfism, 62-5, 99 ff., 168 f., 201 f.
Sūrya, 38
*Sūtra of Brahmā's Net*, 160 f.

Tagore, Rabindranath, 24, 186 f.
Taoism, 114
Temple, 210
Tennyson, 124
Theosophy, 20, 23
Tien, 35
Tilak, 82
Titius, 138
Troeltsch, 27-32
Tukārām, 81 f., 119 f., 185, 213
Tulsī Dās, 47, 83, 102, 154

*Upanishads*, 20, 40-3, 115-8, 150 ff., 181 ff.
Ushas, 38
Uzzah, 67

Varuna, 38 f., 114 f., 148, 179
*Vendīdād*, 95, 164
Vishnu, 79
Vithobā, 82
Vivekānanda, 187

Wahhābīs, 175
Whitehead, 215
Wilson, 17
Wordsworth, 117

Xavier, 16

*Yang*, 113
*Yashts*, 55 f.
*Yazatas*, 55 f.
*Yin*, 113

Zarathushtra. See Zoroaster
Zoroaster, 17, 21, 53-8, 94 ff., 163 ff., 192-8